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ESSAYS IN  
FREEDOM AND REBELLION



# ESSAYS IN FREEDOM AND REBELLION

BY  
HENRY W. NEVINSON



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## THE THEODORE L. GLASGOW MEMORIAL PUBLICATION FUND

The present volume is the fifth work published by the Yale University Press on the Theodore L. Glasgow Memorial Publication Fund. This Foundation was established September 17, 1918, by an anonymous gift to Yale University in memory of Flight Sub-Lieutenant Theodore L. Glasgow, R. N. He was born in Montreal, Canada, May 25, 1898, the eldest son of Robert and Louise C. Glasgow, and was educated at the University of Toronto Schools and at the Royal Military College, Kingston. In August, 1916, he entered the Royal Naval Air Service and in July, 1917, went to France with the Tenth Squadron attached to the Twenty-Second Wing of the Royal Flying Corps. A month later, August 19, 1917, he was killed in action on the Ypres front.

## PREFACE

NATURALLY, I like to dedicate this little book to my many friends in the United States, and I can only wish it might be taken as some return for the pleasure their charm and intellectual sympathy have given me. It is but a collection of short essays written from time to time during the last fifteen or twenty years, as occasion suggested. But the essays do truly represent thoughts and observations gathered in the course of a varied and active life, which may now, unfortunately, be called long.

There was an old Greek who boasted that all his life he had followed War and the Muses. For more than thirty years I too have followed and studied War, but no love of adventure or exercise of any military faculty I possess has ever blinded me to War's inevitable abomination. From childhood I have followed the Muses with passionate worship as the revealers of hidden realities in Nature and human Life. But Nature and human Life have been more to me than the highest imaginations of the Muses themselves, and a fulness of Life, transfused with a poignant delight in Nature, has been my reward.

H. W. N.

London, 1920.



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# I

## THE CATFISH

**B**EFORE the hustling days of ice and of “cutters” rushing to and fro between Billingsgate and our fleets of steam-trawlers on the Dogger Bank, most sailing trawlers and long-line fishing-boats were built with a large tank in their holds, through which the sea flowed freely. Dutch eel-boats are built so still, and along the quays of Amsterdam and Copenhagen you may see such tanks in fishing-boats of almost every kind. Our East Coast fishermen kept them chiefly for cod. They hoped thus to bring the fish fresh and good to market, for, unless they were overcrowded, the cod lived quite as contentedly in the tanks as in the open sea. But in one respect the fishermen were disappointed. They found that the fish arrived slack, flabby, and limp, though well fed and in apparent health.

Perplexity reigned (for the value of the catch was much diminished) until some fisherman of genius conjectured that the cod lived only too contentedly in those tanks, and suffered from the atrophy of calm. The cod is by nature a lethargic, torpid, and plethoric creature, prone to inactivity, content to lie in comfort, swallowing all that comes, with cavernous mouth wide open, big enough to gulp its own body down, if that could be. In the tanks the cod

rotted at ease, rapidly deteriorating in their flesh. So, as a stimulating corrective, that genius among fishermen inserted one catfish into each of his tanks, and found that his cod came to market firm, brisk, and wholesome. Which result remained a mystery until his death, when the secret was published and a strange demand for catfish arose. For the catfish is the demon of the deep, and keeps things lively.

This irritating but salutary stimulant in the tank (to say nothing of the myriad catfishes in the depths of ocean!) has often reminded me of what the Lord says to Mephistopheles in the Prologue to "Faust." After observing that, of all the spirits that deny, He finds a knave the least of a bore, the Lord proceeds:—

Des Menschen Thätigkeit kann allzuleicht erschlaffen,  
Er liebt sich bald die unbedingte Ruh;  
Drum geb' ich ihm gern den Gesellen zu,  
Der reizt und wirkt und muss als Teufel, schaffen.

Is not the parallel remarkable? Man's activity, like the cod's, turns too readily to slumber; he is much too fond of unconditioned ease; and so the Lord gives him a comrade like a catfish, to stimulate, rouse, and drive to creation, as a devil may. There sprawls man, by nature lethargic and torpid as a cod, prone to inactivity, content to lie in comfort swallowing all that comes, with wide-open mouth, big enough to gulp himself down, if that could be. There he sprawls, rotting at ease, and rapidly deteriorating in body and soul, till one little demon of the spiritual deep is inserted into his surroundings, and makes him firm, brisk, and wholesome in a trice—"in half a jiffy," as people used to say.

“Der reizt und wirkt”—the words necessarily recall a much older parable than the catfish—the parable of the little leaven inserted in a piece of dough until it leavens the whole lump by its “working,” as cooks and bakers know. Goethe may have been thinking of that. Leaven is a sour, almost poisonous kind of stuff, working as though by magic, moving in a mysterious way, causing the solid and impracticable dough to upheave, to rise, expand, bubble, swell, and spout like a volcano. To all races there has been something devilish, or at least demonic, in the action of leaven. It is true that in the ancient parable the comparison lay between leaven and the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven was like a little leaven that leavens the whole lump, and Goethe says that Mephisto, one of the Princes of Evil, also works like that. But whether we call the leaven a good or evil thing makes little difference. The effect of its mysterious powers of movement and upheaval is in the end salutary. It works upon the lump just as the catfish, that demon of the deep, preserves the lumpish cod from the apathy and degeneration of comfort, and as Mephisto, that demon of the world, acts upon the lethargy of mankind working within him, stimulating, driving to production as a devil may.

“A society needs to have a ferment in it,” said Professor Sumner of Yale, in his published essays. Sometimes, he said, the ferment takes the form of an enthusiastic delusion or an adventurous folly; sometimes merely of economic opportunity and hope of luxury; in other ages frequently of war. And, indeed, it was of war that he was writing, though himself a pacific man, and in all respects a thinker of obstinate caution. A society needs to have a

ferment in it—a leaven, a catfish, a Mephisto, the queer, unpleasant, disturbing touch of the kingdom of heaven. Take any period of calm and rest in the life of the world or the history of the arts. Take that period which great historians have agreed to praise as the happiest of human ages—the age of the Antonines. How benign and unruffled it was! What bland and leisurely culture could be enjoyed in exquisite villas beside the Mediterranean, or in flourishing municipalities along the Rhone! Many a cultivated and comfortable man must have wished that reasonable peace to last for ever. The civilised world was bathed in the element of calm, the element of gentle acquiescence. All looked so quiet, so imperturbable; and yet all the time the little catfish of Christianity (or the little leaven, if you will) was at its work, irritating, disturbing, stimulating with salutary energy to upheaval, to rebellion, to the soul's activity that saves from bland and reasonable despair. Like a fisherman over-anxious for the peace of the cod in his tank, the philosophic Emperor tried to stamp the catfish down, and hoped to preserve a philosophic quietude by the martyrdom of Christians in those flourishing municipalities on the Rhone. Of course he failed, as even the most humane and philosophic persecutors usually fail, but had he succeeded, would not the soul of Europe have degenerated into a flabbiness, lethargy, and desperate peace?

Take history where you will, when a new driving force enters the world, it is a nuisance, a disturbing upheaval, a troubling agitation, a plaguy fish. Think how the tiresome Reformation disturbed the artists of Italy and Renaissance scholars; or how Cromwell disgusted the half-way moderates, how the Revolution jogged the sentimental

theorists of France, how Kant shattered the Supreme Being of the Deists, and Byron set the conventions of art and life tottering aghast. Take it where you will, the approach of the soul's catfish is watched with apprehension and violent dislike, all the more because it saves from torpor. It saves from what Hamlet calls—

That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat—  
Of habits devil.

In the Futurist exhibition held in Sackville Street in 1912, one of the most notable pictures was called "Rebellion." The catalogue told us that it represented "the collision of two forces, that of the revolutionary element made up of enthusiasm and red lyricism against the force of inertia and the reactionary resistance of tradition." The picture showed a crowd of scarlet figures rushing forward in a wedge. Before them went successive wedge-shaped lines, impinging upon dull blue. They represented, we were told, the vibratory waves of the revolutionary element in motion. The force of inertia and the reactionary resistance of tradition were pictured as rows on rows of commonplace streets. The waves of the revolutionary element had knocked them all askew. Though they still stood firmly side by side to all appearance (to keep up appearances, as we say) they were all knocked aslant, "just as a boxer is bent double by receiving a blow in the wind."

We may be sure that inertia in all its monotonous streets does not like such treatment. It likes it no more than the plethoric cod likes the catfish close behind its tail. And it is no consolation either to inertia or cod to say that this disturbing element serves an ultimate good, rendering it alert, firm, and wholesome of flesh. However salutary, the

catfish is far from popular among the placid residents of the tank, and it is fortunate that neither in tanks nor streets can the advisability of catfish or change be submitted to the referendum of the inert. In neither case would the necessary steps for advance in health and activity be adopted. To be sure, it is just possible to overdo the number of catfish in one tank. At present in this country, for instance, and, indeed, in the whole world, there seem to be more catfish than cod, and the resulting liveliness is perhaps a little excessive, a little "jumpy." But in the midst of all the violence, turmoil, and upheaval, it is hopeful to remember that of the deepest and most salutary change which Europe has known it was divinely foretold that it would bring not peace but a sword.

## II

## THE DRAMA OF FREEDOM

AT Terry's, in the Strand, one Saturday afternoon in 1907, the Literary Theatre Society gave a performance of "The Persians" of Æschylus, and a full and cultivated audience came to witness it. Some famous scholars were there, some modern poets, and hardly anyone who had not heard something of Athens and the Persian invasion. Confined to a small and heavily curtained stage the actors moved uneasily in gorgeous robes. The messenger fell so close to the great Queen-Mother's knees that she seized and shook him, as Cleopatra seizes her messenger. The Chorus of Councillors had no room for their rhythmic movement to and fro. In turn, instead of in unison, they took up the utterances of foreboding, and terror, and sorrow—in turn, and in prose. All was in English prose—good prose, but about as different as language could be from the mouth-filling, overwhelming, Æschylean line. Except for a few touches on a hidden harp, no music was heard, no chant or song. Though it is of great importance to the play that it should run without pause from start to finish, the curtain was dropped for a quarter of an hour in the middle, to allow opportunities for social intercourse. Yet the whole performance took only an hour and a half, and the audience

issued into the March sunshine in ample time for afternoon tea.

Never was the greatness of a poet more strangely vindicated. With everything against them—hampered by language, and prose, and space, and alien spectators—still the actors did not obliterate the eternal significance of that drama of freedom. We seemed to sit once more in the old wooden theatre beside the rock of the Acropolis, while overhead was the open sky of Greece. But two thousand three hundred and eighty years have passed since that first performance, when the sacred citadel was still littered with the burnt ruins of primeval temples which the invader had destroyed, and the jumble of the holy statues he had broken—blue bulls, and serpents, and fixedly smiling goddesses with red hair—was barely surrounded for protection by hastily constructed walls. On that day the event which the drama celebrates was only seven years old, and not a man in the audience but remembered the terror and glory of the time. Full in view across the sea stood the coasts to which the youngest spectators there had been hurried with their mothers when the incomprehensible barbarians swarmed into their homes. Just to the westward rose holy Salamis, where those who were fortunate to be of ripe age accomplished the great deliverance. In the strait itself lay the little rock on whose shore the shepherd Pan delighted to dance, and there they had slaughtered the proudest-born of all that devouring host like sheep.

On a cliff beyond the new harbour a king had set up a silver-footed throne. Around him scribes stood ready to record the most glorious deeds of the day. That king had

enchained the seas, and bridged the channels, and flogged rebellious waves with thongs. In his service came the Kings of Tyre and of Sidon. Before him stood Queen Artemisia, wiser than kings. At his feet a thousand ships were set in array, manned by the indomitable sailors of the world—men from Cyprus and rocky Cilicia, and from the shifting sand-banks of the Nile; and with them the sons of the Phoenicians who had sailed round Africa, and, going westward, had seen the sun upon their right, and had returned through the Pillars from the dim stream of Ocean. Drawn up in masses on the shore stood ranks of Persians and Bactrians and Medes, an innumerable host, which drank rivers dry and ate up fertility like the locusts.

He who sat upon the silver-footed throne was the King of Kings, whose empire no man could measure. It reached the lake at the world's end, and the peaks where spearmen watch like eagles above the gulf of nothingness. It reached the cold homes where griffins brood over hoards of gold. It reached the streams of Indus, where ants bigger than foxes burrow in the golden sand. It reached the Cimmerian darkness, into which the king's father had chased back the blinking hordes that once had ventured out into the light of the sun. It reached the frozen steppes, where a hideous race bows down in worship before a sword, and drinks mare's milk from human skulls. Egypt was his, and all her mysterious wealth of immemorial wisdom. Nineveh was his, and Chaldæan Babylon, and all her astrologers and monthly prognosticators, her hundred gates of bronze, and terraced gardens hanging in air, her walls three hundred feet high, and her temple of Bel. Ecbatana was his, the Median city, built in seven concentric circles of gigantic

walls, battlemented in seven distinct colours, so that it stands like a circular rainbow of white battlement, and of black, and of scarlet, and blue, and sardonyx, and silver, and gold. Susa was his, and into his treasure-house all the wealth of Asia and of Lydian Crœsus had been poured. Thus, in the pride of uncounted possessions and unimaginable empire, the King of Kings sat upon his throne, and the whole audience well remembered the one poor row of Hellenic ships drawn up to confront his ineffable might as sole bulwark for the freedom of the world.

Æschylus himself was there, as he had been at Marathon before, and his younger brother, leading the charge of brazen prows, delivered the first crashing blow of victory. But, with ironic skill, instead of displaying before his Athenian audience the scene of triumph so familiar to them all, he afforded them that most pleasurable kind of sympathy, in which sorrow for the sufferer is mingled with personal exultation. He placed his drama in the royal palace at Susa, where Atossa was impatiently awaiting the news of her son's great triumph—Atossa, the selfsame queen who, years before, had urged her husband, Darius, to the invasion of Greece, because she wanted to count among her handmaids the fair girls of Athens and Argos, of Sparta and Corinth. Now her triumph seemed assured, but still she was impatient and uneasy. Like the mother of Sisera, she looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey?" Harassed by ill-omened dreams, she comes to consult the Persian Councillors, themselves dubious with foreboding. Through the long centuries we can feel the shiver of joy that passed

over the intent Athenian audience on that first day, when she asked the casual question:—

Where is that city, Athens, in the world?

And, for answer, she was told:—

Far in the West, where sinks the worshipped sun;  
Slave to no man, and subject to no lord.

Ill news comes fast; with blow on blow tragic destiny strikes down the contemptuous pride of wealth and empire, such as the gods themselves blind with delusion. The messenger rushes in, telling of beaches where men gasped like stranded fish, of promontories strewn with unburied dead, of famished hosts, and of thousands drowned under melting ice. “Who is not dead?” cries the queen in her despair. The ghost of her husband rises to foretell the destruction of the army left behind. Xerxes himself, her son, the King of Kings, enters at last, a cowardly fugitive, longing only for death, his embroidered robes tattered and defiled, his shame so deep that not even a Chorus of Councillors can find a word of palliation or comfort. Together with him they pass from the stage, deplored in anguished lamentations the terrible things which Greeks, in the struggle for freedom, had brought upon the Persian name.

There is nothing like it in all literature. No poet has ever again won so enviable a reward as the shout that rose from the Athenian theatre when the messenger, describing Salamis to the queen, first spoke those lines:—

Duly the right wing first advanced to fight,  
And then their whole fleet came, and from the decks  
One cry was heard, “O sons of Hellas, rise!

Strike for the freedom of our land! Oh! strike  
For our children's freedom, and our wives and gods,  
And our ancestral graves! Now all's at stake!"

Phrynicus wrote a drama on the Persian wars, but it told of disaster, and the Athenians fined him, and forbade the play to be repeated. Shakespeare's "Henry the Fifth" was not contemporary, and its theme was not freedom's victory. That of all the dramatists then living, not one wrote a drama on the Armada, makes us doubt if the Armada ever really sailed. Of great poets, Byron comes nearest to Æschylus for personal service in the cause of freedom; but it was not his own country for which he fought. To the poet who, twelve years after "The Persians," was to produce in the "Agamemnon" the highest achievement of the human mind (as a great critic has rightly called it)—to him alone the supreme happiness had been reserved of sharing glory in the only noble kind of war, and of telling the history of its greatest battle in a drama enacted before his own comrades-in-arms.

### III

### OF FEAR

HERE was once a child so possessed by the devil that he would sit paralysed at the foot of the nursery stairs, being afraid to go up alone in the dark, though he heard comfortable voices on the top. Day and night he was haunted by fear—of ghosts, of murderers, of dwarfs and giants, of burglars, of faces that might look through windows, of hands that might come feeling round open doors, of creaking furniture, and of things nameless and void. He was terrified of loneliness, but people terrified him more, and the horror of a party inevitably approaching weighed on him like an execution for many days beforehand. Acquainted with no literature but the Bible, he envied Nebuchadnezzar eating grass like oxen, and wet with dew in the wilderness. Knowing hymns for his only poetry, he loved the line, “O’er moor and fen, o’er crag and torrent,” equally with the verse:—

Could I but find some cave unknown,  
Where human foot had never trod,  
Yet there I should not be alone,  
On every side there would be God.

But in that verse he loved only the first two lines, making them a wish, not an hypothesis; for where no human foot had trod, he might possibly escape from fear.

In boyhood, his terror increased. He made wide detours in hopes of avoiding quite friendly people. If he saw them approaching up a street, he would turn and run. At school, he hid in woods for fear of his playmates. He shammed sick for weeks to avoid them. At the sound of a master's rage he almost lost consciousness. Though naturally idle, he was driven by fear to overwork. At the university he stood trembling before a shy tutor's door, and went away without knocking. He made a record by refusing the Dean's command to breakfast, unable to face either the Dean or his daughters. Often he went hungry because, when it came to the point, he could not bring himself to walk up Hall to the scholars' table. Cast upon the world, he refused fair chances of a competency in his fear of a possible employer. Though he thought he could write, he avoided publishers and Fleet Street like the pestilence. He was like the man who wanted to be a tailor, but had not the courage. Caught at last by a pitying editor, he suffered such terror before every evening's work that from the Embankment he watched the Thames as a possible escape.

Suddenly he plucked up courage. He submitted himself secretly to a course of mental homœopathy. "If terror is your disease," he said to his soul, "drug yourself with terror." His few friends were astonished to see him join the Volunteers. As a guide in life, he first took for his motto, "The better part of discretion is valor," but finding that too long, he changed it to "Fear only Fear," perhaps remembering that saying of Montaigne's: "It is feare I stand most in feare of. For, in sharpness it surmounteth all other accidents." In the same essay he also found a

parallel to himself in the story how, at the siege of Saint Paul by the Earl of Bures, horror and fear did so choke, seize upon, and freeze the heart of a gentleman, that having received no hurt at all, he fell down stark dead upon the ground before the breach. To escape such a death's perversity, our friend, with resolution, battled on the windy plains of Aldershot, shared the greater perils of various wars, exposing his safety to hunger, plagues, and wounds, consorted with generals and sergeant-majors, visited the haunts of slavers and cannibal tribes, confronted the countenance of the threatening Cabinet Minister, and faced women in their homes. After many years of this rigorous treatment, he tells us he can now assume the virtue of a courage he has never possessed, can move about the world without reproach, and usually suppress all external evidences of terror, even though, in moments of deadly peril, or of encounters with authority, or of social intercourse, his inward fear causes him as much anguish as in boyhood.

Many are like him now. Many in our new armies, I suspect, are like him. Probably the Greeks drew distinctions between the different kinds of courage, of which this assumed and unnatural courage is one. But so far as I for the moment remember, the first definite example of its analysis was the often-quoted case of the Crimean officer who, being ridiculed for obvious terror by his men, retorted, "If you were half as afraid as I am, you would have run away long ago." In one of Lord Wolseley's essays, he says that for practical service in the field he prefers the natural, unconscious, or wild-beast courage. Napoleon would probably have said the same, for in his

Maxims he writes that such conscious motives as love of country or some other enthusiasm may be of advantage with young and half-trained soldiers, but the fortitude which he placed higher than courage can only become part of the soldier's nature by hardship and want, suffered under good instruction and severe discipline. We cannot dispute such authorities, but the kind of courage and fortitude they demand is rather to be found in professional or regular armies, such as that superb force which we sent to France in 1914, than among our present officers and men, few of whom had any thought of becoming soldiers till the war struck us suddenly between the eyes.

As it is, our generals must put up with troops who, to a large extent, possess only the secondary or deliberate kind of courage, and are more conscious of fear than the old professional soldiers were, no matter how gallantly they conceal it. It is a good kind of courage, and the men are probably cleverer than in the old army. The weakness of this kind is that it cannot always be securely depended upon. It may vary from day to day with health, or even with the weather. It is subject to imagination and to panic. There was a sergeant-major condemned to death for cowardice in France, but the general, thinking he looked rather "livery" (as well he might!), gave him another chance in the ranks. At the next "shove" his bravery was so distinguished that the sentence was wiped out and the stripes restored. I have known a man who some years ago volunteered for a war in which this country had no concern. He was inspired by love of a cause, love of adventure, hope of displaying courage, or what not; but when the firing began, he hid behind a rock and rejoiced when

a "cushy," or comfortable, little wound sent him home. More than once in this war I saw average British battalions scurrying about like disturbed ants, paying no heed to officers, and running in every direction but the right one, just because the imagination of death had been too much for a few of them, and the infection had caught the rest.

In conscript armies, where men are forced into the ranks without any consideration as to their fitness for soldiering, this sort of imaginative panic is more likely to happen than among even the new troops of voluntary armies. Though all the French and British soldiers in the field paid the natural tribute of brave men to German bravery, and though the record of such regiments as the Prussian Guards could not be surpassed for apparent indifference to death, a certain week in 1916 brought many stories of raised hands and crowding surrenders in German trenches. The story of one German who offered the contents of his pockets as a bribe to his British captors not to cut his throat went the round of the correspondents. From similar events one of them concluded that "the German is, beyond all doubt, of baser metal than our men." That may be so, but events of this kind, happening in young, half-trained, and conscript armies, do not prove it. No one who has not tried can have any conception how he will behave when the moment of peril comes—when the Minenwerfer shell is visibly lumbering towards him, or the air flashes with shrapnel, or the signal "over the parapet" comes.

There are few who can realise or describe the horror of modern war while they are in the midst of it. Most

men are too much occupied with their own “bit” or their own safety. There is also a point at which the imagination becomes torpid or paralysed to horror, as one steps over soft and yielding bodies or avoids greenish hands and faces projecting from the earth. Of all the descriptions of the great war from the inside, there are very few to equal “The Great Push,” by Patrick Macgill, the stretcher-bearer navvy. It is so true a picture that I doubt if it would have been permitted or endured at the beginning of the war. At all events, my own account of fighting in Flanders, as accurate as I could make it, was refused publication in England. But we have steeled ourselves afterwards, and even a cinema, representing death in an attack, was authorised officially. So in Corporal Macgill’s book we found true accounts of horror and of fear. Of a scene where the limbs of men were lying “all over the place,” he writes:—

The harrowing sight was repellent, antagonistic to my mind. The tortured things lying at my feet were symbols of insecurity, ominous reminders of dangers from which no discretion could save a man. My soul was barren of pity; fear went down into the innermost parts of me, fear for myself.

Or again, when he was bringing in a wounded man who could just walk:—

When we came to the places where the dead lay six deep we had to crawl across them on our hands and knees. To raise our heads above the parapet would be courting quick death. We would become part of that demolition of blood and flesh that was necessary for our victory. . . . On either side we could hear the wounded making moan; their cry was like the yelping of drowning puppies. But the man who was with me seemed un-

conscious of his surroundings; seldom even did he notice the dead on the floor of the trench; he walked over them unconcernedly.

Thus can fear paralyse the ordinary emotions of even unusually courageous men. It can paralyse thought so that sometimes it was only on return to peaceful places like England that one realised the meaning of war, and then one felt the men and women around one moving like embodied spirits on the very edge of death. Yet, by the mental homœopathy of which I spoke, even fear, or the outward manifestation of it, can be overcome. By thousands of our people it was overcome every day of the war.

## IV

### “LEST WE FORGET”

**I**HAVE often dwelt upon the glamour shed over the past by time alone. That glamour is the true “Triumph of Time,” for time is not so much the destroyer as the renovator, the decorator, the illuminator, perpetually at the work of making old bareness picturesque. Time is the Royal Academy artist, always slurring over the objectionable, the painful, the atrocious, always drawing a veil here, dabbing on a bit of moss there, and swilling a slush of sentiment over the other place. It is so in personal life. Think of your happiest hours, how purely golden they look, how full of joyous light! Time has daubed that gold upon them, and glazed them with a light which never was. Time has adroitly smudged out the fear that haunted you then, the hesitation which took half your joy, the bodily hunger or thirst, the disturbing midges, the blistered foot, the toothache, or internal pains. For even upon the individual life time works with the very genius of common art, selecting this dainty bit, omitting that unpleasant fact, solicitous only for prettiness or romance.

With the same mitigating falsity, time sets to work upon the public past. One is sometimes tempted to describe the great artist as the man who touches nothing from which he does not strip the adornment, but time is not an artist

of that kind. It touches nothing which it does not effeminateley adorn. Some it tempts to yearn over mediæval saints; others to adore the fourteenth century as though life were then one lovely illuminated manuscript; others to revel in the Renaissance as a dream of naked beauty and marble limbs. But it is especially over war that time throws the iridescent gleam (I have compared the action of time to the comfortable skill of the Academic artist, but, in treating war, time adds Censorship to Academy. Look through, if you dare, the battle scenes in the Academy catalogues or in the illustrated papers of the five years' war; it is ten thousand to one you will not find a single British corpse represented there. Anticipating time, the Censorship forbade the presence of unpleasantry. My artist son ventured to paint two of our dead fallen beside the wire, but the Censorship rejected the picture, and over the offensive bodies a broad strip of brown paper was pasted to encourage the others. We know as a matter of figures that nearly 800,000 of our race, including the Irish, were killed in the war; but the Censorship allowed only Germans to be killed, and figures are soon obliterated by the delicate tracery of time's lichens, mosses, and Virginia creeper.

These gentle arts of lying and disguise were all very well so long as the war continued at its height, and something of its horror was brought home inevitably even to the patriots of the clubs and tea-rooms. But now such arts are charged with hideous danger. It is not as though war were a thing of the past, and we could cover it up in the mists of romance or sweet oblivion. A filthy sort of war goes on in many lands, and the filthiest sort—war by starvation of the helpless—may be renewed at any

time. Already our best generals are urging us by some form of universal service to prepare for the next war, though they piously hope it may be distant. Already the mention of disarmament is received with scornful or melancholy smiles, though disarmament was one of the hopes for which young men died. If war is indeed to be renewed, and the world can never escape, we could only hope that the moment came quickly, while the memory of its loathsomeness is still fresh among the men who have known it. For then they might refuse to march, and our gaols would not contain the multitude of objectors. But with every year the details of that loathsomeness will fade from memory, and time will practise the ancient trick by drawing over them the glamour of the past. In Sir Ian Hamilton's eloquent little book, "*The Millennium?*"—half a plea for the supposed "chivalry" of war, half a noble protest against conscription—he writes:—

With a certitude which is extracted from repeated experiences I can assure those millions of fighting men who never came into personal contact with war until 1914-1918 that their loathing of war will only endure at the most three years. The Great War has strengthened, not weakened, the warlike impulse; with that fact we must reckon.

Yes, we must reckon with that fact, for that is the glamour we fear. It was of that glamour Lord Robert Cecil was thinking when, in the Albert Hall, June, 1917, he said:—

The cause of all these evils (Government blunders, profiteering, and so on) is war itself. Do not be blinded by poets and historians. There has been a conspiracy not yet broken down to dwell on the glories of battle and cover over its horrors. The

truth is that war has always produced these results, more or less marked according to the magnitude of the struggle, and war always will produce these results.

So also Mr. Clynes, on the same occasion, said:—

They heard sung a great deal in praise of war, but mostly by men who had never been out. He had verses by poets and rhymesters who would have them believe that the business of going over the top was a joyful athletic exercise. If he were Food Controller now and had the task of rationing these men, he would like to feed some of them on their own lines.

In passing, I may observe that most of the poets of this war have been out themselves, and have sung a very different tune. Never since Greece, or, perhaps, since Elizabethan days, have the poets been brought so sharply up against the full abomination of war, and it is an appalling picture they have rightly drawn of it. Our war poets, even the best, are too many to mention here; but think of the account of war rendered only by such men as Siegfried Sassoon, Edward Thomas, Osbert Sitwell, Max Plowman ("War and the Creative Impulse"), Cameron Wilson ("Magpies in Picardy"), or George Willis ("Any Soldier to his Son"). It is not in their work that you find the deceptive glamour of time and romance. They were too young to know the martial radiance which sheds a glory over peaceful dwellers in Piccadilly and South Kensington. But one at least has foreseen the day, some fifty years hence, when adventurous lads will sigh for the stirring times their grandfathers knew, and as they listen to the old men's tales of horror, they will see the war only through the rainbow mists of time:—

But the boys, with grin and sidelong glance,  
Will think, "Poor grandad's day is done,"  
And dream of those who fought in France,  
And lived in time to share the fun.

It is against the imminent peril of this glamour that we must stand on guard, lest we forget. It so happens that the best of the poets, having for once seen things with their own eyes, have done their best to aid us. Hark how the Soldier addresses his Son:—

You'd like to be a soldier and go to France some day?  
By all the dead in Delville Wood, by all the nights I lay  
Between our line and Fritz's before they brought me in;  
By this old wood and leather stump, that once was flesh and  
skin,  
By all the lads who crossed with me but never crossed again,  
By all the prayers their mothers and their sweethearts prayed  
in vain,  
Before the things that were that day should ever more befall  
May God in common pity destroy us one and all.

That, to be sure, is a prayer which may very easily be answered "in the affirmative," as they say in Parliament. Already soldiers of the old type have complained that there is nothing sportsmanlike in war to-day. They denounce it as bloody murder. Mr. Whitlock, in his account of the "German Occupation of Belgium," tells us that the old Emperor of Austria was heard lamenting, "Der Krieg hat Nichts elegantes mehr." It reminds one of his ancestor who hated war "because it spoilt his beautiful troops." Certainly there is nothing elegant about war now. It is bloody murder; indeed, it always has been, for bloody murder is its only object and its only means. But in a year

or two the murder will be bloodier and more rapid, involving the whole civilian population in death even more surely than our naval blockade involved our enemy's young. London a few minutes from France or Belgium; Liverpool and Manchester a few hours from New York; one bomb that will lay a city flat; another bomb that will kill all the citizens by poison—well, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, will all be in the same Charon boat anyhow. No one will then sing, "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go"; and that will be one consolation.

But no memories or apprehensions of horror suffice to dim the glamour of the past, increasing as it recedes. Remember Lot's wife. Our professional soldiers, politicians, and profiteers look regretfully backward, and, as they stiffen into pillars of salt, their attitude does not change. "Are we prepared," asked Lord Robert Cecil, "are we prepared to scrap once and for all the old system of alliances and counter-alliances; and secret treaties and competitive armaments; the balance of power, and all other noxious fruit of international rivalry?" And with one voice the pillars of salt both in France and this country have answered, "No, we are not prepared." To use Lord Robert's phrase again, it is the voice of "facile pessimism" that speaks. But it speaks in the full limelight shed from the heroism of men who thought they died for a very different and a far nobler cause. This backward-turning eye has always been the deadly adversary of faith; for, as the poet said of knowledge, faith "sets her forward countenance, and leaps into the future chance." It is often what the old philosophers used to call a "mortal leap"—a leap in which everything must be risked. But unless we take

it, the world will remain hanging around the charred purlieus of Sodom and Gomorrah, gradually sticking up a few shanties as fuel for the next general conflagration.

It may be that faith's mortal leap into the unknown symbolises the very adventure needed to take the shine out of the glamour clinging to war. Reason, the psychologists now tell us, is powerless against passion, and certainly reason has never been so powerless as now. If passion can be driven out only by passion, where shall we look for the passion strong enough to chase away this ancient passion of war, so rapidly idealised, so fondly transfigured by the past? Will it rise from the strange adventure of disarmament? Or from the wild adventure of a League of Nations, hitherto hardly conceived? Or from civil wars supplanting international wars, and waged with better reason? Or will it come, as the anything-but-facile optimists expect, from a wide diffusion of love, and an attempt to practise some untried religion, such as Christianity? One thing only we dare to prophesy: it must come from a mortal leap of faith—such faith as overcame the human passion for human flesh, now subdued except in remote places and during war time; or such faith as overcame the human passion for persecuting religious opinions, now subdued except during war time and in Poland, America, and Great Britain.

## V

## A LEAGUE OF AGE

IT is one of those many things not generally known that a "League of Age" has recently been established, having its headquarters at the sign of "The Golden Vanity," in Charing Cross. Its motto is "Older and Bolder"; its single precept runs, "We must grow old, but need not grow nasty"; and the society is bound by only one rule, that every member over fifty shall risk his life, fortune, or reputation in some warlike, political, or other adventure at least once every year. There is no subscription, but all trophies, whether of a defeated enemy's scalp or stupidity, pass into the possession of the League to defray the expenses of the annual dinner that is held at the winter solstice and lasts twenty-four hours. Women are admitted to membership on equal terms, but they are allowed the privilege of taking the risks under fifty, if they desire them.

Undoubtedly, the institution of such a corporation is a sign of modern tendency. The traditional qualities of the old and the young are changing places, and now it is crabbed youth and age that cannot live together. Youth is full of care, age of sport. Youth is weak and cold, age is hot and bold. We know men and women whose opinions advance a mile with every whitening hair, and for sober

counsel and discreet we turn to the sad boy-graduates of twenty-two. "What doth gravity out of bed at midnight?" is now asked of solemn young figures just come up from college to offer the solution so long awaited for the evils of mankind. Had Wordsworth lived into these days, he would have been spared the bathos of a line that mars one of the noblest English poems. If he had known how quick would be the transfer between the attributes of youth and age, he would not have written about the "years that bring the philosophic mind." The gain to truth as well as beauty in his glorious Ode would have equalled the pleasure of another half-century of life. Years no longer bring the philosophic mind; rather, they take it away, for it is the young who now philosophise. Or, if ageing minds philosophise at all, they follow the cheerful and concrete schools of fishing, golf, and cabbages.

I suspect that in nature this was always so, only that man has been frightened by the solemnity of the teachers who invoked him continually to ponder his latter end; and, as a rule, their latter end is nearer to the old than the young. "*Memento mori*" has been the curse of mankind, reducing us a little lower than the animals, who seldom think of death, whereas nearly all divines have followed Cicero in supposing that the properest human study is to die. It is this doctrine that has infected growing age with melancholy, as was seen in the gloomy terrors which haunted Dr. Johnson, by nature so blithe and venturesome to the last. A kind of after-shadow from the same idea darkened even the deliberate Stoicism of Matthew Arnold, who need have had no apprehension, seeing that he died in early age after leaping a fence. Yet, in perverse and

fruitless anticipation, he wrote many unpleasant things in answer to the question, "What is it to grow old?" finishing with the lamentable verse:—

It is—last stage of all—  
When we are frozen up within and quite  
The phantom of ourselves,  
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost,  
Which blamed the living man.

How much more human is the ordinance in Plato's "Laws" that old men should be allowed a little wine to make them sing! How much more divine Spinoza's deduction that the free man's meditation will not be a meditation of death, but of life! It were almost profane to call the Rabbi Ben Ezra jolly; yet, compared to that chilling Stoic, what a merry note he chants from his first lines onward:—

Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life for which the first was made.

Youth is the solemn and melancholy time. It is youth that digs beneath the cypress shade, and calls for death to come away. Hear youth discussing the affairs of State or the problems of the universe, and you will escape with relief to the merry pranks of age. It is a sweet despair that afflicts the young, but a grievous none the less, and only by memory of his own pompous days can the grown man protect himself against their portentous seriousness. "How can you endure so calmly the aggression of the young?" Goethe was asked, and he replied:—

To call them unbearable I'd have a right,  
If I had not been so unbearable too.

“When the melancholy and distress of youth are past,” writes a great medical authority upon cerebral dyspepsia, “the adult patient often attacks his food with the vigour and success of a boy.” Equanimity and a wide tolerance are but natural results of the experience that worketh hope, and from the improved digestion of middle age we may expect an increasing zest and cheerfulness in life. These are among the thousand fine qualities that so endear Falstaff to every honest heart. He was no longer an eagle’s talon in the waist, but whatever was his age in years, he remained always the youngest there. “What, ye knaves, young men must live!” he cries; and, again, of the travellers, “Whoreson caterpillars! Bacon-fed knaves! They hate us youth.” It is the very spirit of sixty-five or seventy that speaks. In the modern world, this excellent spirit appears to be spreading more widely, as we said. The average age of high achievement is rising. When he began his essays, Montaigne was still short of forty, yet he writes as though his active career were as necessarily over as a modern Leicester operative’s of the same age. He is inclined to think that all the great enterprises of mankind have been accomplished by men under thirty, and he gives as instances that Augustus was supreme judge of the world at nineteen, and Alexander died at thirty-two. But life has now become more secure, the opportunities of genius are distributed over greater length of years, and if Alexander had been permeated with quinine, he might have discovered the other hemisphere, and the United States had now been Hellenic instead of Yankee. Kant was nearly

sixty when he shook the theology of ages. Moltke waited till seventy before he won his chiefest glory on the field. Gladstone was seventy-five before he set out upon the noblest and most daring revolution of his life.

In all fiction there are but two faultless masculine characters—Don Quixote and Mr. Pickwick—and both are men of mature age. In Mr. Pickwick we see the sunlit benevolence of years, the unlimited tolerance, the imperturbable temper that, when a difficulty arises about hot water, can still exclaim: “Thank you; cool will do!” That is the lovable temperament which we may suppose the League of Age aims at inculcating by its precept that we must grow old, but need not grow nasty. In Don Quixote we see the other type of honourable age—the type which the League encourages as well by its motto, “Older and Bolder,” as by its one rule ordaining on members the risk of life, fortune, or reputation at least once a year. Grey hairs are the banner of adventure, the new white plume of Navarre; and the more we reflect on that truth, the more natural it appears. We find caution in the young, and we must make all allowances for their case. With care they may possess a long and enviable future, full of joyful deeds. Unless they exercise their habitual prudence now, they might lose that inestimable possession. But for an old man’s caution there can be neither pardon nor excuse.

Year by year the old man and the middle-aged have less and less to lose, less and less that they need fear risking. In compensation for the irretrievable loss of youth, we confidently look to them for the elderly virtues of rashness, recklessness, and a certain splendour of generosity. That is why increasing age is full of noble illusions, always

longs for increasing adventure, and stands ever ready to prick out, happy as a lover, upon some high emprise for human kind. That is why, speaking from the divided flame in the eighth ditch of the eighth circle, the soul of Ulysses told how, after his return from Troy, neither his affection for his son, nor his piety to his father, nor the love that ought to have comforted Penelope could restrain his longing to win further experience of the world and of man's sin and virtue; and how, with one ship and his little crew of comrades, he steered west between the Pillars, and there cheered them on (for they were old and slow) with the words: "My brothers, who through a hundred thousand perils have reached the West at last, it is but a little vigil your lives have still to keep. Do not, then, grudge yourselves the knowledge of the unpeopled land behind the sun. Consider from what seed you spring: you were not made to live like brutes, but to follow courage and wisdom like a sinking star." Whereon nothing could hold them more, until they reached the place where night gazes upon the other pole, with all its constellations.

## VI

### THE THIRD CIRCLE

**I**T was Saturday night, and to English people there is always something a little voluptuous in the thought. Even the classes that never work then feel a sanctified right to relaxation.

Down the Strand the audiences were pouring out of the theatres, and one of the fashionable restaurants began to fill rapidly. Passing through wide entrance courts and down marble steps covered with crimson carpet, the men and women vanished into cloak-rooms and issued out again in undisguised splendour to face the grave managers standing ready to exclude anyone whose dress did not comply with the recognised fashion. The salon was built on two levels, with a low flight of steps between. Pillars and a glass partition further divided it, giving a sense of quiet and privacy, but revealing long vistas of faint and various lights. The chief feeling of colour was pale yellow, but this was mitigated by white marble, white paint, the white cloths on the separate tables, and the delicate greys and pinks of large square shades that hung over each electric lamp. On the higher level, near the entrance, a string band played quiet music from time to time—so quiet and unobtrusive that its insignificance harmonised with the conversation rather than interrupted it. At the

furthest end of the lower salon, the outer wall was of glass, so that the pale beauty of the interior was carried on into the dark, among plane trees glimmering to the arc lamps of a broad road, and through the plane trees the water of the black river could here and there be seen, flowing under a large but waning moon.

Tables had been engaged beforehand, and as each party arrived in twos, or threes, or fours, they could read their title clear upon a long list prepared by the head waiter. Standing at the central entrance, he allotted the numbers, inexorable as a judge among the shades. Where each party was set, there it fed, for weal or woe. The hour had come, the food was ready, the napkins were opened. Supper began, and from table to table waiters in gold-braided uniforms bore the separate dishes, while the music gave out a soft but encouraging strain.

Like profound emotion, the theatre induces hunger, and though since morning light this was the fifth meal to everyone there, and the seventh to many, it was none the less welcome to all. Only three of the previous meals had been as large, and only one larger. The early tea and bread-and-butter in bed, the little something about eleven, and the afternoon tea with sandwiches and cake hardly deserved to rank as meals in comparison. But indeed the supper itself was light and simple compared to the dinner of nearly four hours earlier. Just some soup refined from oxen, fish served in a sauce of other sea things, the most delicate parts of a flock of sheep with peas, a choice of various birds and animals cold, and paper baskets filled with creams of peculiar flavours—that was all. Champagne to drink, coffee to finish; it would be hard for a

chef to devise a work of art more classic in simplicity. To have offered more might have seemed a little gross, almost insolent, as though suggesting a previous insufficiency.

Rose bushes covered with blossom stood in the light and warmth of the entrance lounge beside the band, and on each of the tables was a glass vase of fresh-cut flowers—carnations, sweet peas, and other things of faint and harmonious hues. Round them sat men and women, pale or dark or red. At some tables the people were distinctive and of obvious types. A party of youths, conscious of maturity, and determined to drink life to the dregs, sat primly on their chairs and talked as they had heard their elders talk before them. A young girl in high-breasted gown, with the Greek key-pattern round the edge and golden fillets in her yellow hair, sat opposite an oldish man, dark and bald, who watched another girl at a far-off table, with simple, high-breasted gown and golden fillets in her hair. At another table sat a monstrous woman in silks, whose little green eyes glittered above her bulging cheeks. Opposite was her monstrous mate. His little eyes glittered too, and on the back of his neck the ridges of fat rose like waves. Between them ate their little daughter, fit offspring of a table d'hôte. Her pale hair was tied with a pale bow, her frock cut like a child's pinafore, and, in silence unrelieved, she ran the course that was set before her. These were personalities distinct and immediately perceived, but over the rest there hung a common resemblance such as pervades an Asiatic race or the cattle of our different counties. They were not exactly alike, and they could tell each other apart quite easily, just as the Chinese can. But in men and women could be seen the

underlying type—solid, large-limbed, and large-featured. Their eyes were rather prominent, their noses high, their jaws heavy, and mouths rather like a horse's mouth. The men were early bald, the women full-figured, and at the meeting point of their dresses in front diamonds shone. Round their necks they had wound strings of pearls or rough little lumps of pearly stuff, and even the plainest tried to win beauty by binding her hair with bands and glittering things. They talked without vivacity, and laughed under compulsion, maintaining without effort the vacant looks of leisure.

It was not an aristocratic class, neither were they professional, still less were they improper. The two girls in classic gowns might have been theatrical, but the other women were not theatrical, and no gleam of the struggle for life illumined their faces. The men had not the commercial look nor even the speculator's look. They had only the look of the unemployed, comforted by plenty. What class to call them could not be decided. They were a new race, fresh upon the world, the last product of creation—a supper class, adapted to the environment of recently developed restaurants. Three things, said the wise man, were too wonderful for him, yea, four, which he knew not—the way of the eagle, the serpent, the ship, and a man with a maid. But he might add a fifth wonder now—the way so many people have of getting two to five thousand a year.

Men, women, and girls, they ate and then they drank. They ate and drank again. But when the first pangs of hunger were soothed, and the wine set about its inscrutable business, the noise of voices rose higher. The insig-

nificance of the music still harmonised with the human conversation as a perpetual undertone, but its continuance was drowned and forgotten. The table of youths told stories; the companions of the classic girls cast devouring looks over their glasses; the fat man and woman gasped for breath, with eyes glazed, and mouths half open; the little girl with a bow sat almost sated; the large men and women laughed and shouted to be heard. A mingled smell arose of flowers and powder and scents and of living flesh and flesh that was cooked. The air grew hot with human warmth. The fragrance of coffee was added to the other smells. Men leant back heavily on their chairs. Women's eyes met theirs with comfortable repletion. The noise increased. The music swelled its sound. In perfect security the body took its ease. The satisfaction of life was near its utmost height, when suddenly half the lights went out, because the Lord's Day had begun.

There was a hush, and at some of the tables, the people stood up and began to move. One by one more lamps went out, and more again. A glimmering darkness filled the room. The arc lights on the road outside threw white gleams here and there; the plane trees became more visible through the glass, and the large but waning moon was dimly seen, blurred by rainy clouds. The people had all risen now, and were moving among the tables, like indistinguishable ghosts. The women's dresses had turned to grey and misty film, flashing here and there as some jewel caught the distant rays. Like children in the dark, they spoke hardly above whispers, but stood for a moment as dim and uncertain forms under the light malign, and for that moment they became spirits, disembodied, and im-

mortal, as though their creation had no beginning and their existence could never cease.

Incalculable and lamentable souls they seemed, full of unknown capacities, but already tottering on the edge of that circle in hell where cold and heavy rain falls for ever—a mingled rain of large hail and snow and black water pouring through the darkened air. There the ground stinks of putrefaction, and under the rain the spirits howl like dogs, turning first one side to its fury and then the other. They are blind, and their bodies are but an empty semblance, inseparably commingled with the filthy downpour. Nevertheless, the Worm Cerberus, with three throats and belly wide as theirs once was, clutches and flays and tears them into shreds, while from the circle just below they may hear the god of money calling upon King Satan with obscure and inarticulate tongue. For it is the third circle they are in—the circle of the gluttonous desires.

But unconscious of peril as of immortality, the well-fed and heavy ghosts escaped gibbering up the stairs, collected their cloaks, and passed out into the city's filthy rain. In hansoms and motors they sniffed the Sabbath air with satisfaction, looking forward securely to a warm and restful night before breakfast rose again. But to hunger watching them, it was a dubious consolation to reflect that perhaps they were only mortal after all, and would never suffer a worse hell than they were suffering now.

## VII

### THE PENALTY OF VIRTUE

**H**IS crime was that he actually married the girl. It had always been the fashion for an Austrian Archduke to keep an opera-dancer, whether he liked it or not, just as he always kept a racehorse, even though he cared nothing about racing. For any scion of the Imperial House she was a necessary part of the surroundings, an item in the entourage of Court. He maintained her just as our Royal Family pay subscriptions to charities, or lay the foundation-stone of a church. It was expected of him. *Noblesse oblige.* Descent from the House of Hapsburg involves its duties as well as its rights. The opera-dancer was as essential to Archducal existence as the seventy-seventh quartering on the Hapsburg arms. She was the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Imperialness. She justified the title of "Transparency." She was the mark of true heredity, like the Hapsburg lip. As the advertisements say, no Archduke should be without one.

But really to love an opera-dancer was a scandal for derision, moving all the Courts of the Empire to scorn. Actually to marry her was a crime beyond forgiveness. It shook the Throne. It came very near the sin of treason, for which the penalties prescribed may hardly be whis-

pered in polite ears. To mingle the Imperial blood with a creature born without a title, and to demand human and divine sanction for the deed! It brought a blush to the cheek of heraldry. What of the possible results of a union with a being from the stage? Only if illegitimate, could such results legitimately be recognised; only if ignoble in the eyes of morality, could they be received without censure among the nobility. It was not fair to put all one's Imperial relations, to say nothing of the Court officials, the Lord High Chamberlain, the Keepers of the Pedigree, the Diamond Sticks in Waiting, the Grooms of the Bed-chamber, and the Valets Extraordinary—it was not fair to put their poor brains into such a quandary of contradiction and perplexity. And who shall tell the divine wrath of that august figure, obscurely visible in the recesses of ancestral homes, upon whose brow had descended the diadem of Roman Emperors, the crown of Christ's Vicar in things terrestrial, and who, when he was not actually wearing the symbol of Imperial supremacy, enjoying the absolute right to assume the regalia of eight kingdoms in turn, including the sacred kingdom of Jerusalem, possessed forty-three other titles to pre-eminent nobility, not counting the etceteras with which each separate string of titles was concluded? Who, without profanity, shall tell his wrath?

It was the Archduke Johann Salvator of Austria, head of the Tuscan branch of the House of Hapsburg, who confronted in his own person that Imperial wrath, and committed the inexpiable crime of marriage. It is true that he was not entirely to blame. He did not succumb without a struggle, and his efforts to resist the temptation to legality

appear to have been sincere. Indeed, as has so often happened since the days of Eve, it was chiefly the woman's fault. He honestly endeavoured to make her his mistress, in accordance with all Archducal precedent, but she persistently, nay, obstinately, refused the honour of Imperial shame. With a rigidity that in other circumstances might, perhaps, have been commended, but, in relation to an Archduke, can only be described as designing, she insisted upon marriage. She was but Fräulein Milli Stubel, light-skirted dancer at the Court Opera-House, but, with unexampled hardihood, she maintained her headlong course along the criminal path of virtue. What could a man do when exposed to temptation so severe?

The Archduke was in love, and love is an incalculable force, driving all of us at times irresistibly to deeds of civil and ecclesiastical wedlock. He was a soldier, a good soldier, in itself an unusual and suspicious characteristic in one of the Hapsburg blood. He was a musician and a man of culture—qualities that, in a prince, must be taken as dangerous indications of an unbalanced mind. He was an intimate friend of the Crown Prince Rudolph, that bewildering personality whose own fate was so unhappy, so obscure. Skill in war, intelligence, knowledge, friendship—all marked him out as a man only too likely to bring discredit on Archducal tradition. His peers in birth shook their heads, and muttered the German synonym for "crank." Worse than all, he was in love—in love with a woman of dangerous virtue. What could such a man do against temptation? Struggle as he might, he could not long repel the seductive advances of honourable action. He loved, he fell, he married.

In London, of all places, this crime against all the natural dictates of Society was ultimately perpetrated. We do not know what church lent itself to the deed, or what hotel gave shelter to the culprits' shame. By hunting up the marriage register of Johann Orth (to such shifts may an Archduke be reduced in the pursuit of virtue), one might, perhaps, discover the name of the officiating clergyman, and we can confidently assume he will not be found upon the bench of Bishops. But it is all many years ago now, and directly after the marriage, as though in the vain hope of concealing every trace of his offence, Johann Orth purchased a little German ship, which he called by the symbolic name of *Santa Margherita*,—for St. Margaret suffered martyrdom for the sin of rejecting a ruler's dishonourable proposals,—and so they sailed for South America. By what means the wedded fugitives purposed there to support their guiltless passion, is uncertain. But we know that they arrived, that the captain gave himself out as ill, and left the ship, together with most of the crew, no doubt in apprehension of divine vengeance, if they should seem any longer to participate in the breach of royal etiquette. We further know that, in July, 1890, the legal lovers sailed from Buenos Ayres, with a fresh crew, the Archduke himself in command, and were never heard of more.

An Austrian cruiser was sent to search the coasts, in vain. No letters came; no ship has ever hailed the vessel of their iniquity. The insurance companies have long paid the claims upon the Archduke's premiums for his life, and that fact alone is almost as desirable an evidence as a death-certificate to his heir. But one Sunday in July, 1910,

the Imperial Court of Austria also issued an edict to appear simultaneously in the chief official gazettes of the habitable globe, declaring that, unless within six months further particulars were supplied concerning one, namely, the Archduke Johann Salvator, of the House of Austria and Tuscany, otherwise and thereafter known as Johann Orth, master mariner, and concerning his alleged decease, together with that of one Milli Orth, *née* Stubel, his reputed accomplice in matrimony, the property, estates, effects, titles, jewels, family vaults, and other goods of the aforesaid Johann Orth, should forthwith and therewithal pass into the possession of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, nephew and presumptive heir of the aforesaid Johann Orth, to the estimated value of £150,000 sterling, in excess or defect thereof as the case might be, it being thereafter presumed that the aforesaid Johann Orth, together with the aforesaid Milli Orth, his reputed accomplice in matrimony, did meet or encounter their death upon the high seas by the act or other intervention of God.

Oh, never believe it! There is an unsuspected island in untravelled seas. Like the island of Tirnanog, which is the Irish land of eternal youth, it lies below the sunset, brighter than the island-valley of Avilion:—

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea.

To that island have those starlike lovers fared, since they gave the world and all its Imperial Courts the slip. There they have discovered an innocent and lovely race, adorned

only with shells and the flowers of hibiscus; and, intermingled with that race, in accordance with indigenous marriage ceremonies, the crew of the *Santa Margherita* now rear a dusky brood. In her last extant letter, addressed to the leader of the *corps de ballet* at the Ring Theatre in Vienna, Madame Milli Orth herself hinted at a No-Man's Land, which they were seeking as the home of their future happiness. They have found it now, having trodden the golden path of rays. There palls not wealth, or state, or any rank, nor ever Court snores loudly, but men and women meet each evening to discuss the next day's occupation, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer collects the unearned increment in the form of the shell called Venus' ear. For a time, indeed, Johann Orth attempted to maintain a kind of kingship, on the strength of his superior pedigree. But when a democratic cabin-boy one day turned and told him to stow his Hapsburg lip, the beautiful ex-opera-dancer burst out laughing, and Johann agreed in future to be called Archduke only on Sundays. With their eldest son, now a fine young man coming to maturity, the title is expected to expire.

## VIII

### INVESTED LIVES

TILL quite a recent age, many people, even outside France, talked a lot about the glories of war. And within the memory of pre-war moralists, many people, even outside England, talked a lot about the moral and intellectual advantages bestowed by war upon a nation. Rather more than twenty years ago we passed through the Kipling period of bellicose glory, and about ten years ago there were many who deplored the soft degeneracy of a bloodless peace. War in its reality has come. It is not over yet, but it is certain that for the next twenty-five years no one, even in France, will talk about glory. The other kind of praise seems likely to revive much sooner. In an apologetic sort of way, it is already beginning to breathe. There are many objections raised against the League of Nations. Some people fear encroachments on "sovereignty"; some a reduction of our naval supremacy; some a restriction of our Imperial aggrandisement. But philosophers plead that strife is the inherent law of nature, and in nature they rightly include man. Struggle and conflict, they say, are essential to progress; these are the mainsprings of evolution; without them there is no advance in the external universe or in man; to them we owe, not merely the physical eminence of mankind, but

the development of our arts and inventions. On the moral side, too, how would the character of man attain to true excellence without the opportunities for devotion, self-sacrifice, and endurance provided by war? Who would wish mankind to sink into the torpid effeminacy of perpetual peace? Who that realises man's greatness would wish to see him content with a pig's paradise?

The words have a familiar sound. We have heard them from philosophers who have never known a hardship more terrible than the intrusion of females to dust their books. We have heard them from successful authors who have described as the finest life on earth the life of soldiers taking their pastime in slaughtering "natives" with weapons "cold or hot." Those who lived in Germany before the war have heard them in every *Student Kneipe* and every salon of Berlin. To many natures, and those among the finest, there is something irresistible in their appeal. For after all, it is quite true that man is never long satisfied with comfort. He sickens of an easy, gentle life. He demands energy, exertion, adventure, danger, the opportunity of quick and daring decision. He has doubts about any kind of restful paradise, especially the pig's.

Perhaps these arguments may prevail. Perhaps, with the express object of elevating the moral and intellectual nature of mankind, we may continue to shatter, explode, poison, and drown the finest specimens of our race; to lay our most beautiful cities in ruins; and to afflict whole countries with lunacy, rickets, tuberculosis, anæmia, apathy, and all the similar progressive results of blockade. Even under a League of Nations there would be room for these moral and intellectual advantages in part, for one

hears the League's benevolent supporters casually mentioning the blockade as the League's benevolent weapon. But if there is the smallest chance of getting rid of war at any future time, the philosophers are driven up against the problem stated by William James: "How are we to find a moral equivalent for war?" In the old and happy days of wealthy travel, the comfortable people who felt the need of that equivalent sought it in the exploration of New Guinea, or the slaughter of Africa's wild beasts, or in walking to Tibet, fishing in Norway, or trundling about England in a caravan. They supposed themselves leading a hardy and strenuous life. They thrust themselves into temporary discomfort for the spice of the thing. It was their moral equivalent for war.

To wealthy and leisured people that sort of argument for war sounds high-spirited and fine. But we notice one peculiarity: we have never heard it advanced by a working man or working woman. Workpeople (the enormous majority of men and women in this and every country) do not seem to require that spice of danger and discomfort. They seem hardly to crave for the opportunities which war provides for devotion and self-sacrifice. The idea of a moral equivalent for war seems never to have occurred to them. The apprehension of sinking into a pig's paradise does not appear to affect them. They seldom seek out hardship as a contrast or stimulus to pleasure. They think little of amateur labour as an escape from boredom. If you suggested to them the hardship of camping-out as supplying a substitute for the moral and intellectual advantages of war, they would stare. They do not seem to realise the moral and intellectual advantages of war, or to need them.

Perhaps they have them already. The Home Office Report on Mines and Quarries, by the Chief Inspector of Mines, published in the autumn of 1919, shows that in that year there were 1,008,867 coal miners at work in our 2,801 mines (under ground and above ground, including about 11,000 women), and 20,821 miners in our metal mines (under ground and above ground, including about 360 women). Let us consider only the coal miners, since their position is one of the burning questions of the moment. The amount of coal raised and distributed by these miners is given at 238,917,503 tons during last year, which showed a falling-off of about 20,000,000 tons compared with the year before, no doubt owing to the call for more miners in the Army. The Coal Controller before the Sankey Commission estimated, we believe, a further falling-off of about 20,000,000 tons in the following year owing to shorter hours; but that estimate was perhaps above the mark. The number of violent deaths caused by accidents in the mining were 1,401 in 1919, an increase of about thirty on the year before; and of this number 1,277 were killed by accidents under ground. Those figures do not show a very high percentage of deaths; nothing like so high as the percentage of deaths in war. But still there is enough death to give that spice of danger to existence which the philosophers and the well-to-do say they require. Most of the deaths are caused by falls of the roof or sides in the galleries; some by falls in the shafts; some by explosions; others by underground fires and faults in the haulage. But besides the fatal accidents, there are many forms of risk and excitement. There is the perpetual anxiety lest someone may neglect the safety lamp, or light

a pipe, or go wrong in "firing a shot" in a dusty or gassy mine. There is the excitement when the coal begins "creeping," "stirring," "heaving," or "bumping." A sportsman must be nimble when the rhinoceros charges, but the miner must be equally nimble when the "tubs" come rumbling along a narrow working. Think of the fine athleticism required along such a working as here described:—

He shouted up and got no answer; he went up into their place (companion heading) and saw nobody; he then went up into his own place, and just where the No. 4 througher branches off the main heading he found Flynn half sitting, half lying, with his eyes shut; he thought Flynn was joking, and he pinched him, but then he saw there was something wrong with him. He then saw McVee lying beyond Flynn with his face down among small coal, and he lifted his face clear, then got down as fast as he could and ran to the shaft bottom for help, as in the very steep working where the way up and down is by clinging hands and feet to the props he was of no use to the helpless men by himself.

Both men were dead, suffocated by fumes of fired "shots" for blasting. But could a sportsman or mountaineer desire finer exercise to his nerve than climbing that steep working where the way up and down is by clinging hands and feet to the props, and life or death may depend upon the speed?

It is the same all through. In good mines there are Rescue Stations, with trained men always ready for emergency, just as in a Field Ambulance with its gallant "body-snatchers" at the front. Deeds of superb gallantry are done, and the Report records cases in which the King Edward Medal was won by courage and self-sacrifice at

least equal to the bravery that wins a Victoria Cross. The moral tonic of danger and hardship which we suppose the sportsman seeks by killing big game at vast expense comes to him only now and again. To the miner it comes daily. And to the miner's wife and children it comes daily. It comes without money and without price, except perhaps the price of life. No one who has seen it will forget the mining village when the subterranean rumble has been heard, and the black column of dust and smoke is seen rising from the shaft—the desolate upland, the gaunt "stacks," the bleak rows of hovels from which women with shawls over their heads run to the pit's mouth, and in silent, pale intensity watch the "cage" go down and at last return. For, as the rich man invests his capital in a mine and expends part of the proceeds on his moral tonic of sport, so the miner invests his life, and gets his moral tonic free. They do not seem to need the equivalent to war. And yet, as Frank Hodges, the miners' leader, once said, "They think, and think profoundly."

No one is required to think, and so coal mining might hold out the greatest of all temptations to the young aristocrat or wealthy heir, on the lookout for moral tonics. For coal mining is probably the most adventurous and varied of all our civilian wars for livelihood, though we suppose the ironworks run it close. But, for people of less enterprise, there are plenty of dangerous opportunities besides, and the terrible accident in the Levant mine shows that a Cornish tin mine may be as perilous as any dusty mine in the North. Another recent White Book—The Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops—tells us something about them. We are there

told that, in the factories under inspection, 53,491 accidents due to machinery were reported in last year, and 108,663 not due to machinery. Among these accidents there were 1,579 fatal cases. A large number of the accidents were caused by neglect to guard machinery or by carelessness in dealing with it; but there are many other exciting forms of risk, as, for instance, by "Industrial Poisoning," which is the counterpart of poison gas in war. You may still be killed by lead poisoning (once the curse of the Potteries, but now declining), or by "phossy jaw" (also, happily, declining). Or you may be killed by arsenic poisoning, mercurial poisoning, toxic jaundice (due to making explosives with T. N. T.), and by anthrax. It must, for instance, be a fine tonic to the moral fibre to know that, if you work at intermediate dyestuffs, your liver and kidneys may undergo "distinct degenerative changes":—

Many of the cells of the liver were found to be vacuolated, and others, chiefly in hepatic and portal zones, were pigmented; the reddish brown pigment being in the form of fine granules, none of which gave the reaction of free iron with ferro-cyanide of potassium. Professor Delépine in his report states, "It is possible that the necrosis of the renal epithelium is more advanced than the usual histological reaction would indicate, and that the nature of the poison has altered the usual reactions of the nucleoplasm."

Does not that sound almost as good as a description of any internal wound in war? And yet all these forms of violent or poisonous wounds and death are encountered week after week by our workpeople in the ordinary course of the day's work. That, we imagine, is why they do not

require the stimulus or tonic of war to save them from the effeminate degeneracy that our philosophic teachers and doctrinaires so dread for the country. The immediate question is how to extend the blessings of the workpeople to others who deplore the want of them. Those who live at ease are, as William James said, an island on a stormy ocean. How can they be granted a share in the healthy excitement and moral stimulus of the storm? William James proposed a general conscription for work, sending every man and woman of every rank and property to labour in the mines or factories for a certain number of years. It was a good proposal, more obviously beneficent than military conscription. But we think compulsion quite unnecessary. We are convinced that the rich and do-nothing classes are so sick of boredom, so weary of ever climbing up the climbing wave of amusement ("the happiness of people who do not think," as Swift said) that at the smallest chance of variety and stimulating occupation, especially if accompanied with danger and such excitement as coal mining, they would rush in thousands to volunteer for labor. During the railway strike of September, 1919, we saw with what skill and pleasure the Earl of Portarlington milked goats. It was not a particularly adventurous employment—nothing like so risky and heroic as coal mining. But we have little doubt that the week of the railway strike was the happiest week of Lord Portarlington's life, and that if only he were given a chance, he would gladly rush to milk the goats again.

## IX

## THE PRIEST OF NEMI

HERE it is cool under thick alders, close to the water's edge, where frogs are doing their very best to sing. Hidden in some depth of the sky, the Dog Star rages, and overhead the midday sun marches across his blazing barrack-square. Far away the heathen violently rage; the world is full of rumours of war, and the kings of the earth take counsel together against liberty and peace. But here under thick alders it is cool, and the deep water of the lake that lies brooding within the silent crater of these Alban hills, stretches before us an unruffled surface of green and indigo profoundly mingled. Wandering about among overgrown and indistinguishable gardens under the woods, women and girls are gathering strawberries and loading them up in great wicker baskets for the market of Rome. The sound of sawing comes from a few old houses by the lake-side, that once were mills turned by the nymph Egeria's stream, where Ovid drank. Opposite, across the lake, on the top of the old crater's edge, stands a brown village—the church tower, unoccupied "palace," huddled walls and roofs piled up the steep, as Italian villages are made. That is Genzano. On the precipitous crag high above our heads stands a more ancient village, with fortress tower, unoccupied castle,

crumbling gates, and the walls and roofs of dwellings huddled around them. That is Nemi, the village of the sacred wood.

Except where the rock is too steep for growth, the slopes of the deep hollow are covered with trees and bushes on every side. But the trees are thickest where the slope falls most gently—so gently that from the foot of the crater to the water's edge the ground for a few hundred yards might almost be called a bit of plain. Under the trees there the best strawberries grow, and there stood the temple of mysterious and blood-stained rites. Prowling continually round and round one of the trees, the ghastly priest was for centuries there to be seen:—

The priest who slew the slayer,  
And shall himself be slain.

No one can tell in what prehistoric age the succession of murdering and murdered priests first began that vigil for their lives. It continued with recurrent slaughter through Rome's greatest years. About the time when Virgil was still alive, or perhaps just after Christ himself was born, the geographer Strabo appears actually to have seen that living assassin and victim lurking in the wood; for he vividly describes him "with sword always drawn, turning his eyes on every side, ready to defend himself against an onslaught." Possibly the priest suspected Strabo himself for his outlandish look and tongue, for only a runaway slave might murder and succeed him. Possibly it was that selfsame priest whom Caligula, a few years after Christ's death, hired a stalwart ruffian to finish off, because he was growing old and decrepit, having defended himself from onslaughts too long. Upon the lake the Emperor con-

structed two fine house-boats, devoted to the habits that house-boats generally induce (you may still fish up bits of their splendour from the bottom, if you have luck), and very likely it was annoying to watch the old man still doddering round his tree with drawn sword. One would like to ask whether the crazy tyrant was aware how well he was fulfilling the ancient rite by ordaining the slaughter of decrepitude. And one would like to ask also whether the stalwart ruffian himself took up the line of consecrated and ghastly succession. Someone, at all events, took it up; for in the bland age of the Antonines the priest was still there, pacing with drawn sword, turning his eyes in every direction, lest his successor should spring upon him unawares.

In the opening chapter, which states the central problem, still slowly being worked out in the great series of "The Golden Bough," Dr. Frazer has drawn the well-known picture of that haunted man. "The dreamy blue," he writes:—

The dreamy blue of Italian skies, the dappled shade of summer woods, and the sparkle of waves in the sun, can have accorded but ill with that stern and sinister figure. Rather we picture to ourselves the scene as it may have been witnessed by a belated wayfarer on one of those wild autumn nights when the dead leaves are falling thick, and the winds seem to sing the dirge of the dying year. It is a sombre picture, set to melancholy music—the background of forest showing black and jagged against a lowering and stormy sky, the sighing of the wind in the branches, the rustle of the withered leaves under foot, the lapping of the cold water on the shore, and, in the foreground, pacing to and fro, now in twilight and now in

gloom, a dark figure with a glitter of steel at the shoulder whenever the pale moon, riding clear of the cloud-rack, peers down at him through the matted boughs.

For the priest himself it can hardly have been a happy life. Thanks to Dr. Frazer, we now partly know how much of man's religious hope and fear that sinister figure represented. But he himself had no conception of all this, nor can we suppose that even if he had possessed Dr. Frazer's own wealth of knowledge, it would have cheered him much. When violent death impends on every moment and lurks in every shade, it is small consolation to reflect that you stand as a holy emblem, protector of a symbolic tree, the mystic mate both of the tree itself and of the goddess of fertility in man and beast and plant. There is no comfort in the knowledge that the slave who waits to kill you, as you killed your predecessor in the office, only obeys the widespread injunction of primitive religion whereby the divine powers incarnate in the priest are maintained active and wholesome with all the fervour and sprightliness of youth. Such knowledge would not relax the perpetual strain of terror, nor could the priest have displayed an intelligent and scientific interest in all the queer mythologies forcibly dragged in and combined to explain his presence there—Orestes fleeing like a runaway from the blood-stained Euxine shore; or Hippolytus, faithful worshipper of the unwedded goddess, rent by wild horses, and by Diana's prayer to the medicine-god subsequently pieced together into life; or Virbius, counterpart of Hippolytus; or perhaps even the two-faced Janus himself, looking before and after. The finest conjectures of research, though illustrated in the person of the priest himself, could have

supplied him with no antidote to those terrors of ambushed assassination.

In his investigations among the “sword-dancers” of Northern England, Mr. Cecil Sharp has discovered that at Earsdon, after the usual captain’s song, a strange interlude occurs, in which two of the dancers feign a quarrel, and one is killed and carried out for burial amid the lamentations of the “Bessy.” A travelled doctor, however, arrives, and calls to the dead man, “Jack! take a drop of my bottle, that’ll go down your thrittle-throttle.” Whereupon up jumps Jack and shakes his sword, and the dance proceeds amid the rejoicings of Bessy and the rest. So priest slays priest, the British Diana laments her hero slain, the British Æsculapius, in verse inferior to Euripides, tends him back to life, and who in that Northumbrian dance could fail to recognise a rite sprung from the same primitive worship as the myths of Nemi? But if one had been able to stand beside that murderous and apprehensive priest, and to foretell to him that in future centuries, long after his form of religion had died away, far off in Britain, beside the wall of the Empire’s frontier, his tragedy would thus be burlesqued by Bessy, Jack, and the doctor, one may doubt if he would have expressed any kind of scientific interest, or have even smiled, as, sword in hand, he prowled around his sacred tree, peering on every side.

Why, then, did he do it? How came it that there was always a candidate for that bloody deed and disquieting existence? It is true that the competition for the post appears to have decreased with years. Originally, the priest’s murder seems to have been an annual affair, regular as the “grotter” which we are called upon to remember every

August in London streets, or as the Guy Fawkes, whose fires will in future ages be connected with autumnal myths or with the disappearances of Adonis or Thammuz yearly wounded. The virtues of fertility's god had to be renewed each spring; year by year the priest was slain; and only by a subsequent concession to human weakness was he allowed to retain his life till he could no longer defend it. The change seems to show that, as time went on, the privileges of the office were regarded with less eagerness, and it was more difficult to find one man a year anxious to be killed.

But with what motive, century after century, no matter at what interval of years, did a volunteer always come forward to slay and to be slain? Certainly, the priest had to be a runaway slave; but was Roman slavery so hideous that a life of unending terror by day and night was to be preferred—a life enslaved as a horse's chained to the grinding mill in a brickyard, and without the horse's hours of stabled peace? Hunger will drive to much, but even when the risky encounter with one's predecessor had been successfully accomplished, what enjoyment could there be in meals eaten in bitter haste, with one hand upon the sword? As to money, what should all the wealth of the shrine profit a man compelled, in Bishop Ken's language, to live each day as it were his last? Promise of future and eternal bliss? The religion held out no sure and certain hope of such a state. Joy in the divine service? It is not to vigorous runaway slaves that we look for ecstatic rapture in performing heaven's will. Upon the priest was bestowed the title of "King of the Wood." Can it be that for that barren honour a human being dyed his hands with murder

and risked momentary assassination for the remainder of his lifetime? Well, we have heard of the Man who would be King, and empty titles still are sought by political services equally repellent.

But, for ourselves, in that forlorn and hag-ridden figure we more naturally see a symbol of the generations that slay the slayer and shall themselves be slain. It is thus that each generation comes knocking at the door—comes, rather, so suddenly and unannounced, clutching at the Tree of Life, and with the glittering sword of youth beating down its worn-out defenders. New blood, new thoughts and hopes each generation brings to resuscitate the genius of fertility and growth. Often it longs imperiously to summon a stalwart ruffian, who will finish off decrepitude and make an end; but hardly has the younger generation itself assumed the office and taken its stand as the Warder of the Tree, when its life and hopes in turn are threatened, and among the ambuscading woods it hears a footstep coming and sees the gleam of a drawn sword. Let us not think too precisely on such events. But rather let us climb the toilsome track up to the little town where Cicero once waited to meet the assassin Brutus after the murder of the world's greatest man; and there, in the ancient inn still called "Diana's Looking-glass" from the old name of the beautiful and mysterious lake which lies in profoundly mingled green and indigo below it, let us forget impending doom over a twopenny quart of wine and a plate of little cuttlefish stewed in garlic, after which any priest might confront his successor with equanimity.

## X

## THE SHEPHERD OF OCEAN

**I**N October, 1918, it was three hundred years since Sir Walter Raleigh was executed in Westminster. No element of tragedy was wanting to that scene. For nearly fifty years Raleigh had stood for England, first as a heroic personality, and then as the shadow of a great name. He had held great place; he had possessed great wealth, which he freely spent for the public cause; he had been one of the beloved friends or lovers of the great Queen; he had extended the country's realm; had battled without ceasing against her mightiest enemy; had penetrated unknown regions of the world, bringing back unknown benefits; he was the last of the old sea-dogs; with the exception of Bacon his judge, and Jonson his friend, he was the last survivor of the Elizabethans; he was at once soldier, sailor, explorer, man of science, scholar, poet, and master of prose. And this versatile and conspicuous figure, imprisoned for twelve years, and now on the verge of old age, was, at the instigation of his lifelong enemy, beheaded by command of the most foolish of all our kings.

It was his tragedy that secured his fame. The doom of a nature so finely endowed and fallen from such high position appealed to the benevolent pity of mankind, always tender to impotent greatness. There was indeed about

Raleigh a certain splendour of attraction. His fine and active form, his dark hair and high complexion, his restless energy on every field of thought and action, his irrepressible daring, his readiness of wit, even a certain severity and reserve of demeanour, combined to form a personality typical of a peculiarly attractive age. Even his love of jewellery and splendid dress was characteristic of a splendid and imaginative time. One remembers that in his finest poem, "The Pilgrimage," probably written in the vigil of what we may call his first execution, he does, it is true, begin very modestly:—

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,  
My staff of faith to walk upon,  
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,  
My bottle of salvation;

but, upon approaching heaven, he proceeds:—

And when our bottles and all we  
Are filled with immortality,  
Then the blessed paths we'll travel,  
Strowed with rubies thick as gravel;  
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,  
High walls of coral and pearly bowers.

That imaginative sumptuousness was characteristic of the man and of the age; and it was also characteristic that he wrote his two best poems, worth all the rest put together, in the night—one before the execution from which he was reprieved, the other before the execution we commemorated in 1918.

His was a magic figure, certainly, moving in a magic world, and for twenty-five years he sailed to and fro upon

the magic tides of fortune. Yet, as I said, but for his tragedy he would not have been so fondly thought upon. It is the dramatic figure of the man that attracts; his particular actions are little known, except by the curious, and few were of great success. In his relations to Ireland he was neither worse nor better than the usual English invaders, who have regarded the Irish lands as their heaven-sent property, and the Irish people as best fitted for slavery or extermination. With Spenser, who gave him the name of "The Shepherd of Ocean," he was in Ireland during the suppression of the Geraldines' struggle for Irish freedom. Under Lord Grey's order he acted as one of the instruments in the hideous massacre at Smerwick, and apparently felt no compunction. Like all English Governments, he was now for severity, and, again, inclined to try a little conciliation. But it occurred to him no more than to other Englishmen that Elizabeth, in bestowing enormous grants of Irish land upon him, was robbing a people of their national inheritance. For the Irish people in the extremity of their wretchedness, as described by Spenser, he appears to have had no feeling, and to have done nothing. Even his introduction of the potato has been a very doubtful benefit; for it has encouraged the "lazy-bed" cultivation, and the potato is in itself a poor, insufficient, and uncertain food.

He advocated the colonisation of America, but the idea came from his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, with whom he made his first voyage. He fitted out the ships which occupied the east coast and named it Virginia, but he was not with them himself. He sailed the Spanish Main, but had no striking success in piracy, and he appears never

to have realised the pecuniary advantages of the slave trade. On his first voyage up the turbulent and variable Orinoco, in five boats, he penetrated over four hundred miles, though under such wretched conditions that he says no prison in England could be found more unsavoury and loathsome than those boats. At last, it is true, he reached a pleasant scene:—

I never saw a more beautiful country [he writes] nor more lively prospects, hills so raised here and there over the valleys, the river winding into divers branches, the plains adjoining without bush or stubble, all fair green grass . . . the deer crossing in every path, the birds towards the evening singing on every tree with a thousand several tunes, cranes and herons of white, crimson, and carnation, perching on the river's side, the air fresh with a gentle easterly wind, and every stone that we stooped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion.

Nor in these pleasing prospects was man altogether vile:—

I have seldom seen a better-favored woman [Raleigh writes of a chieftain's wife]. She was of good stature, with black eyes, fat of body, of an excellent countenance, and taking great pride therein. I have seen a lady in England so like her as but for the difference of color I would have sworn might have been the same.

But the shining metals were largely illusory, and, though one of Raleigh's followers boasted he bought six women for a halfpenny knife, no trade was done in that ware. As is well known, the second voyage to Guiana, which gained release from the Tower, finally ensured his death. It was in every way disastrous. The crew was scoundrelly; Raleigh did not penetrate the river himself;

and Kemys, his old comrade in adventure, failed so miserably that he killed himself on board under the lash of Raleigh's reproaches.

Probably the greatest moment of Raleigh's life—the moment when he ought to have died—was when in the *Warspite* he led the attack on Cadiz Harbour in 1596. He was then about forty-four; was distinguished and honoured; famed for his great voyage of the previous year; consulted on enterprises of sea and land; familiar among the learned and poets of the Mermaid Tavern; himself learned and a poet, too. It is as such that we like to think of him—the typical English rover, and the typical Englishman of letters, capable alike of action and of art. The present time has shown that the country can still produce men of similar nature—men like the old Greek who boasted himself the follower of war and of the Muses. Failures or no failures, Raleigh is the model of a not uncommon English type—the men who, like Ulysses, can call upon their crews not to begrudge their mortal minds a knowledge of the world that lies without inhabitants beyond the sunset and the baths of all the western stars; and who, if ever they return, can themselves tell the story of that mysterious voyage. He chose his friends among the great writers of that age. His elegy upon Philip Sidney's death, though frigid with conceits, is fairly well known. It was his friendship with Marlowe rather than his inquiring mind which brought upon him the charge of "atheism," though upon evidence that would affect no one but a theologian.

From the moment that doltish James appeared in England Raleigh's fall was certain, if only because his lands

were required to glut the loyal greed of esurient Scots. Prison for “*politicals*,” even under sentence of death, was then not so hideous as under our present atrocious system. Raleigh’s wife and son lived with him in the Tower; he was allowed as many books as he wanted; his secretary was there to assist with that vast “*History of the World*”; and a shed was provided for chemical and other experiments, such as his great discovery for distilling fresh water from salt. But for a man abounding in energy, think what twelve years even in the best of prisons means! No wonder his friend Henry, Prince of Wales, said:—

No man but my father would keep such a bird in a cage.

The last brave dash for freedom came, and the man who had known the sea from boyhood was at sea again. But disaster followed disaster; his son was killed, his old comrade killed himself; everything failed. The last act of the tragedy followed, and in that last act we see again the Englishman at his rare best—intrepid and in extremity humorous and gay. Noble as many of the last speeches of those condemned to death for political cause have been, none has surpassed Raleigh’s. Yet his brief sayings, revealing an English—an almost Cockney—humour, are the best remembered. Asking one whether he was coming to the execution to-morrow, he said, “I do not know what you may do for a place, for my part I am sure of one.” To another, who reproved his gaiety, he said, “It is my last mirth in this world, do not grudge it me.” When asked how he liked his last cup of wine, “I will answer,” he replied, “as did the fellow who drank of St. Giles’s bowl as he went to Tyburn, ‘It is a good drink if a man might but tarry by

it.' " And then the final words: when asked which way he would lie upon the block, he said, "It is no matter which way the head lies, so the heart be right." These were sayings worthy of a great Englishman, who possessed some of the peculiarly English failings, it is true, but many of those noble qualities which are to be discovered in our country.

## “WHERE CRUEL RAGE”

“**F**RET not thyself,” sang the cheerful Psalmist—  
“fret not thyself because of evildoers.” For they  
shall soon be cut down like the grass; they shall  
be rooted out; their sword shall go through their own  
heart; their arms shall be broken; they shall consume as  
the fat of lambs, and as the smoke they shall consume  
away; though they flourish like a green bay-tree, they  
shall be gone, and though we seek them, their place shall  
nowhere be found.

A soothing consolation lies in the thought. Why should we fluster ourselves, why wax so hot, when time thus brings its inevitable revenges? Composed in mind, let us pursue our own unruffled course, with calm assurance that justice will at length prevail. Let us comply with the dictates of sweetness and light, in reasonable expectation that iniquity will melt away of itself, like a snail before the fire. If we have confidence that vengeance is the Lord’s and He will repay, where but in that faith shall we find an outlet for our indignation at once so secure, so consolatory, and so cheap?

It was the pious answer made by Dr. Delany to Swift at the time when, torn by cruel rage, Swift was entering upon the struggle against Ireland’s misery. Swift appealed to

him one day "whether the corruptions and villainies of men in power did not eat his flesh and exhaust his spirits?" But Delany answered, "That in truth they did not." "Why—why, how can you help it? How can you avoid it?" asked the indignant heart. And the judicious answer came: "Because I am commanded to the contrary; 'Fret not thyself because of the ungodly.'" Under the qualities revealed in Swift and Delany by that characteristic scene, is also revealed a deeply marked distinction between two orders of mankind, and the two speakers stand as their types. Dr. Delany we all know. He may be met in any agreeable society—himself agreeable and tolerant, unwilling to judge lest he be judged, solicitous to please, careful not to lose esteem, always welcome among his numerous acquaintances, sweetly reasonable, and devoutly confident that the tale of hideous wrong will right itself without his stir. No figure is more essential for social intercourse, or moves round the cultivated or political circle of his life with more serene success.

To the great comfort of cultivated and political circles, the type of Swift is not so frequent or so comprehensible. What place have those who fret not themselves because of evildoers—what place in their tolerant society have they for uncouth personalities, terrible with indignation? It is true that Swift was himself accounted a valued friend among the best wits and writers of his time. Bolingbroke wrote to him: "I loved you almost twenty years ago; I thought of you as well as I do now, better was beyond the power of conception." Pope, also after twenty years of intimate friendship, could write of him: "My sincere love of that valuable, indeed incomparable, man will accom-

pany him through life, and pursue his memory were I to live a hundred lives." Arbuthnot could write to him:—

DEAR FRIEND,—The last sentence of your letter plunged a dagger in my heart. Never repeat those sad, but tender, words, that you will try to forget me. For my part, I can never forget you—at least till I discover, which is impossible, another friend whose conversation could procure me the pleasure I have found in yours.

The friends of Swift, the men who could write like this—men like Bolingbroke, Pope, Arbuthnot, Addison, Steele, and Gay—were no sentimentalists; they rank among the shrewdest and most clear-eyed writers of our literature. And, indeed, to me at all events, the difficulty of Swift's riddle lies, not in his savagery, but in his charm. When we think of that tiger burning in the forests of the night, how shall we reconcile his fearful symmetry with eyes "azure as the heavens," which Pope describes as having a surprising archness in them? Or when a man is reputed the most embittered misanthrope in history, how was it that his intimate friend, Sheridan, could speak of that "spirit of generosity and benevolence whose greatness and vigour, when pent up in his own breast by poverty and dependence, served only as an evil spirit to torment him"? Of his private generosity, and his consideration for the poor, for servants, and animals, there are many instances recorded. For divergent types of womanhood, whether passionate, witty, or intellectual, he possessed the attraction of sympathetic intimacy. A woman of peculiar charm and noble character was his lifelong friend from girlhood, risking reputation, marriage, position, and all that many women most value, just for that friendship and

nothing more. Another woman loved him with more tragic destiny. To Stella, in the midst of his political warfare, he could write with the playfulness that nursemaids use for children, and most men keep for their kittens or puppies. In the "Verses on his own Death," how far removed from the envy, hatred, and malice of the literary nature is the affectionate irony of those verses beginning:—

In Pope I cannot read a line,  
But with a sigh I wish it mine;  
When he can in one couplet fix  
More sense than I can do in six,  
It gives me such a jealous fit,  
I cry, "Plague take him and his wit."  
I grieve to be outdone by Gay  
In my own humorous biting way;  
Arbuthnot is no more my friend  
Who dares to irony pretend,  
Which I was born to introduce;  
Refined it first, and showed its use.

And so on down to the lines:—

If with such talents Heaven has blest 'em,  
Have I not reason to detest 'em?

To damn with faint praise is the readiest defence of envious failure; but to praise with jealous damnation reveals a delicate generosity that few would look for in the hater of his kind. Nor let us forget that Swift was himself the inventor of the phrase "Sweetness and light."

These elements of charm and generosity have been too much overlooked, and they could not redeem the writer's savagery in popular opinion, being overshadowed by that

cruel indignation which ate his flesh and exhausted his spirit. Yet it was, perhaps, just from such elements of intuitive sympathy and affectionate good will that the indignation sprang. Like most over-sensitive natures, he found that every new relation in life, even every new friendship that he formed, only opened a gate to new unhappiness. The sorrows of others were more to him than to themselves, and, like a man or woman that loves a child, he discovered that his affection only exposed a wider surface to pain. On the death of a lady with whom he was not very intimately acquainted, "I hate life," he cried, "when I think it exposed to such accidents: and to see so many thousand wretches burdening the earth while such as her die, makes me think God did never intend life for a blessing." It was not any spirit of hatred or cruelty, but an intensely personal sympathy with suffering, that tore his heart and kindled that furnace of indignation against the stupid, the hateful, and the cruel to whom most suffering is due; and it was a furnace in which he himself was consumed. Writing whilst he was still a youth, in "The Tale of a Tub," he composed a terrible sentence, in which all his rage and pity and ironical bareness of style seem foretold: "Last week," he says, "I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse." "Only a woman's hair," was found written on the packet in which the memorial of Stella was preserved, and I do not know in what elegy there breathes a prouder or more poignant sorrow.

When he wrote the "Drapier Letters," Ireland lay before him like a woman flayed. Of the misery of Ireland it was said (I think by Sheridan):—

It fevered his blood, it broke his rest, it drove him at times half frantic with furious indignation, it sunk him at times in abysses of sullen despondency, it awoke in him emotions which in ordinary men are seldom excited save by personal injuries.

This cruel rage over the wrongs of a people whom he did not love, and whom he repeatedly disowned, drove him to the savage denunciations in which he said of England's nominee: "It is no dishonour to submit to the lion, but who, with the figure of a man, can think with patience of being devoured alive by a rat?" It drove him also to the great principle, still too slowly struggling into recognition in this country, that "all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery." It inspired his "Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures," in which the advice to "burn everything that came from England except the coals and the people," might serve as the motto of the Sinn Fein movement. And it inspired also that other "Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Ireland from being a burden to their Parents and Country, and making them beneficial to the Public. Fatten them up for the Dublin market; they will be delicious roast, baked, or boiled."

As wave after wave of indignation passed over him, his wrath at oppression extended to all mankind. In "Gulliver's Travels" it is the human race that lies before him, how much altered for the worse by being flayed! But it is not pity he feels for the victim now. In man he only sees the littleness, the grossness, the stupidity, or the brutal degradation of Yahoos. Unlike other satirists—unlike Juvenal or Pope or the author of "Penguin Island," who comes nearest to his manner—he pours his contempt, not

upon certain types of folly or examples of vice, but upon the race of man as a whole. "I heartily hate," he wrote to Pope soon after "Gulliver" was published, "I heartily hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth." The philanthropist will often idealise man in the abstract and hate his neighbour at the back door, but that was not Swift's way. He has been called an inverted hypocrite, as one who makes himself out worse than he is. I should rather call him an inverted idealist, for, with high hopes and generous expectations, he entered into the world, and lacerated by rage at the cruelty, foulness, and lunacy he there discovered, he poured out his denunciations upon the crawling forms of life whose filthy minds were well housed in their apelike and corrupting flesh—a bag of loathsome carrion, animated by various lusts.

"*Noli æmulari*," sang the cheerful Psalmist; "*Fret not thyself because of evildoers.*" How easy for most of us it is to follow that comfortable counsel! How little strain it puts upon our popularity or our courage! And how amusing it is to watch the course of human affairs with tolerant acquiescence! Yes, but, says Swift, "*amusement is the happiness of those who cannot think,*" and may we not say that acquiescence is the cowardice of those who dare not feel? There will always be some, at least, in the world whom savage indignation, like Swift's, will continually torment. It will eat their flesh and exhaust their spirits. They would gladly be rid of it, for, indeed, it stifles their existence, depriving them alike of pleasure, friends, and the objects of ambition—isolating them in the end as Swift was isolated. If only the causes of their indignation might

cease, how gladly they would welcome the interludes of quiet! But hardly is one surmounted than another over-tops them like a wave, nor have the stern victims of indignation the smallest hope of deliverance from their suffering, until they lie, as Swift has now lain for so many years, where cruel rage can tear the heart no more—"Ubi sœva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit."

## XII

### THE LAST OF HIS PEERS

**W**HEN a man is deaf, hopelessly crippled, and over eighty, I suppose we must call him old, for the body is preparing its last insane triumph, when in its own dissolution it will involve the spirit. Old in the flesh, George Meredith cannot choose but be. Men of fifty-five could not remember the appearance of his first poems, and probably there are not half a dozen people now living who read "Richard Feverel" in its first year of life. It was the year of "The Tale of Two Cities." I think "Evan Harrington," the second of the novels, had the same date as "Great Expectations," and I have heard that Dickens was unworthily jealous of the young author when it began to appear in *Once a Week*.

So that it was to our fathers' generation that Meredith belonged in his prime—the generation of the demigods, when the great names of Carlyle and Ruskin, Tennyson and Browning, Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot led English literature. Matthew Arnold was just beginning to be recognised, but Hardy and Swinburne were still unknown. It is true that he began to produce masterpieces before he was thirty, and for forty years his creative power was maintained. No Englishman now living has created anything to compare with his work in variety and

scope; or, at most, there is but one younger author who can compare to him. And yet, in point of date, it obviously all belongs to the generation that is gone or going. It is the product of another age, it has won its place, and already we seem to hear the lecturers who carve the epitaphs of literature summarising with equal care its pedigree, its qualities, and its price.

It is a peculiar thing, then, that there is a freshness about his books as of to-day, and all who meet their aged writer find in him a spirit as young as youth. No new Liberal Member, just learning his way to the House, follows the course of the world with brighter zeal. Isolated and almost motionless, he watches the movements of the day, the path of Europe's thought, the gradual fulfilment of notable careers with the mindful observation of a youthful editor inspired by conscience. Nothing appears to escape him, and his memory holds last week as clearly as the Austrian Campaign of 'sixty-six. Neither is there any trace of conscious melancholy in his aspect of the world; no lamentation over modern degeneracy, or regret for the brave days when at last even the British public recognised a great writer in the author of "The Egoist." As he once said of himself, he looks out upon life with young eyes, and one may perceive something of the same unconquerable spirit in the physical pride which disdains the crutches and ear-trumpets of deaf and crippled age.

The head is very noticeable—essentially Greek. It might have served as model for those statues of mature and powerful manhood which, in our museums, are now labelled "A Poet," or "An Orator." But if it is a poet's head, it is a Greek poet's. There is no trace of the inde-

cision, effeminacy, and petulant unrestraint which “a poetic appearance” suggests to modern minds. It belongs to a type that could be honoured even by manly people. It is the head of one who, like Sophocles, could have commanded a fleet as easily as write a tragedy. When we see it, we do not wonder that the Athenians should have expected their great poet to do both as a matter of course. There are modern writers who wear a shut-up, indoor look. Their faces are like the windows of a sick chamber, and we dimly discern the invalid and delicately curtained soul within. But the very look of Meredith tells of the open sky, where the sun marches and the winds pipe, and the thunderclouds mass their battalions. He might have sailed with Drake; he would have made a fine leader of forlorn hopes, and a glorious hunter. Like the Carinthia of his story, he blows the horn of the wild old forest.

Perhaps it was to action rather than letters that his nature ran. I have only once seen him depart from the stately courtesy of his intercourse. He had been saying how much he envied me some distant journey I had made, or significant fighting at which I had been present, and I, to comfort him, had replied with the weary old saying about the really important events of history taking place in the mind. It is difficult to express exactly what one means to a deaf man, and he saw at once I did not really believe that bit of intellectual cant, which must have been concocted in a don’s study as excuse for a lifetime’s idleness. “That’s the stuff they all tell me—they all tell me,” he kept repeating, and glared angrily for a time.

His is the head of an orator, too,—a Greek orator, like Pericles. The great mouth opens almost foursquare. It is

an Attic mask. A spirit seems to be speaking, not with it, but through it, and on a broad scale of sound comes the voice full, unhesitating, and distinct to the last letter. We feel that, as Mendelssohn said of Goethe, he could shout like a hundred warriors. There is no effort about the language; the great sentences are thrown out with the careless opulence of Nature. Metaphors, wit, or epigrams come of themselves, as water follows water from a spring. He thinks in pictures and symbols. A comely and mature lady appears to him at once as "a calm autumn day—and in the morning." In thinking of the conversation of Society he sees a flock of sheep jumping a ditch in turn; a burst of laughter makes a gap; there is a pause; then the rest come hurrying over—"some of them falling short, their hind feet struggling to reach the edge." Speaking of England's persistent refusal to redress the ancient wrong of Ireland, he recalls a man who told him he rather liked having an open sore on his leg; it added an interest to life.

It is the same, when, as often happens, he talks "the adorable silliness of intellect." The pictures follow each other with such vivid reality that raillery can hardly be distinguished from earnest. I remember a story he told of an intellectual banking friend of his, whom he pictured withdrawing to a seaside retirement at the end of a dusty week and regaling himself in sumptuous simplicity upon an enormous crab and a bottle of the finest Burgundy. One saw it all—the house smiling with silver, the gleaming polish of rosewood, the elegant volumes round the walls; the gentle light, the cherry-coloured crab, the ruby in the mellow wine. It was like a Dutch interior, solid satisfaction ennobled by charm. For the sake of cultured hedon-

ism, for the elevation of city life, one longed that it might be true, but it was all a sudden vision of the brain.

To me there was something equally vivid in his proposal for making his poems better known by hiring a meeting-room in Aldeburgh and reading his Odes to the fishermen and other longshore people. One can see that scattered and silent audience, clinging to the chairs like shipwrecked mariners upon the vasty deep, while from the wooden platform beside the harmonium the most splendid of our living writers thunders over their heads some passage like the familiar lines:—

Cannon his name,  
Cannon his voice, he came.  
Who heard of him heard shaken hills,  
An earth at quake, to quiet stamped;  
Who looked on him beheld the will of wills,  
The driver of wild flocks where lions ramped.

One can see the slow puffing of the pipes, the respectful spitting on the floor. One can hear the comments as the jerseyed figures roll away through the gate. “He dew speak it out, and no mistake he dew. They’re right as say he has got a headpiece on him, they are. That there about Tom Cannon comin’ up the straight—that’s the bit for my money!”

But I think his mind moves more easily and with a finer sense for admiration and for irony upon a higher social level. He has created a few notable figures of the poor and labouring classes—the man in “Diana” who “could eat hog a solid hower”; old Master Gammon in “Rhoda Fleming,” with his dumplings and cheering immutability; and,

like everyone else, I should add Mrs. Berry, too,—but for one impossible scene between her and Lucy. Yet he belongs by right to another region—the region of the Comic Spirit, which, as he says in “*The Egoist*,” deals with human nature in the drawing-room of civilised men and women, where we have no dust of the struggling outer world, no mire, no violent crashes to make the correctness of the representation convincing. It is only in this region that the problems of his greatest books could arise—the temptation of Feverel, or the impassioned perplexities of Diana and Emilia Belloni. It is only here that one could find Sir Willoughby Patterne, and rare as happy would be the man of this class who could read that analysis of Egoism without wincing. It was only here that Meredith could fulfil his great office of liberator, as we see it fulfilled especially in “*One of Our Conquerors*,” “*Lord Ormont*,” and “*The Amazing Marriage*.” It is a liberation by thought and courage and passion, and it liberates from the falsity and half-heartedness which Meredith identifies with sentimentalism. It also liberates from the power of the Being which Meredith describes as “the terrible aggregate social woman, of man’s creation, hated by him, dreaded, scorned, satirised, and nevertheless upheld, esteemed, applauded. . . . She exhibits virtue, with face of waxen angel, with paw of desert beast, and blood of victims on it.” It is only in the region of the Comic Spirit that this honourable monster can be found and fought.

In many of his books the scenes of this human comedy are played before a background of the great world’s history—the gallant rebellion of Italy, the upward struggles of the English workmen, the alliance of Bismarck with

Lassalle. So in life, the movements of the time, especially in European lands, have always been accurately present to him, and are present still. What he would think of the Russian revolution, which will be the main European interest of the present generation, might be judged from the revolutionary novel of "Vittoria," or even from brief sentences in it, such as: "We Italians of this period are children of thunder, and live the life of a flash. The worms may creep on, the men must die." As he said to me once when discussing the tyrannicide of people like Plehve: "At such times a Lower Court of Justice arises, and to that we make appeal."

But in speaking of any foreign nation he follows his own rule of insisting always upon the best that they have given to the world, and not upon the worst. Even of Germans he speaks with the respect due to intellectual zeal and the thoroughness of knowledge. He was pleased with a German wine-merchant who once sent him specimen bottles of all the great wines mentioned in the books, with the appropriate quotation marked on each. "No English wine-merchant could have done such a thing—least of all for a German author," he said. But it is to France that he has always been most attracted by all the inborn sympathies of spirit. And he has lately extended a share of the same admiration to the Japanese, for their chivalrous devotion to a code of honour and their exact mastery of detail.

I think it is this chivalrous devotion to a high ideal of honour—this "Bushido"—that he chiefly misses among modern Englishmen. Commercial standards have taken its place, and, as he says in "One of Our Conquerors":—

These Britons wear  
The driven and perplexed look of men,  
Begotten hastily 'twixt business hours.

He is one of the few among us who find rather a dubious blessing in that eternal “silver streak” which enables us to do our killing and dying in war by hiring some thousands of the poor instead of undertaking the business ourselves. If we insist on doing our acts of bravery by proxy, it is hard indeed to maintain the quality of manliness, which he regards as the first essential of a grand nation. So it is that his conversation, like his books, abounds with little strokes of satire: our country is the female annuitant of Europe; London, the Daniel Lambert of cities.

But, in speaking of a nature so full of mental adventure, I will not end upon a note of satire. I would rather think only upon the vital and sunny temper of a man, who, after a long career of obscurity and renown, can still look out upon the world with knowledge and hope undiminished. His work has always moved upon great lines, and to the last he retains the sense of the grandeur and worth of life. “Nature,” he said to me once, “goes upon her way, unfolding, improving, always pushing us higher, and I do not believe that this great process continues without some spiritual purpose, some spiritual force that drives it on.”

And as to death, which, in spite of all his vitality, cannot be much further off from him than it is from the rest of us, he said on the same occasion: “Fearlessness of death is essential for manliness. Doctors and parsons do a lot of harm by increasing the fear of death. I was a very timid and sensitive boy, but at eighteen I determined not to be afraid again. Every night when I go to bed I know

I may not wake up. That is nothing to me. I hope I shall die with a good laugh, like the old Frenchwoman. The curé came wailing to her about her salvation, and she told him her best improper story and died."

When I look at the long row of his books, so full of passion and of thought, and consider that their writer is still among us, still intent upon human affairs, it is such brave and hopeful words as these that I like to remember.

## XIII

### “THE WAY OF ALL FLESH”

ESCAPING from among the minute specialists of Germany, like a rebellious mite escaping from a swarming cheese, I once asked old Dr. Garnett, of the British Museum, whether it would not have been better if Samuel Butler had specialised more. The question was merely youthful cant, and, after wagging his head up and down several times as his manner was, Dr. Garnett wisely answered: “He might have accomplished more, but he would not be Samuel Butler.” That was the secret of the matter. Butler’s value lay in an unusual and salutary personality. His was a mind looking out upon everything that interested him with fresh, vigorous, and ruthless inspection. Many things interested him intensely—religion, painting, music, morphology, psychology, and literature. Within the limits of each vast subject, his interest was rather narrow. In religion, for instance, he took small notice of any form but Christianity; in painting he cared for little but the Italians; in music for little but Handel; in literature for little but Homer and Shakespeare; in natural science for little but “instinct” and inherited memory. But within the limits his interest was intense, and he brought to bear upon each subject that clear and penetrating intellect which seemed to wash it free from all the accumulated moss and smoke and dirt of placidly accepted

tradition. He reminded one of those steam-cleaners that are turned hissing against the venerable mouldiness of ancestral mansions, and reveal them in their naked hideousness, or in any beauty that may be theirs without the picturesque effeminacy of decay. Of him it may truly be said, "He touched nothing from which he did not strip the adornment"; and what higher praise could be given to any artist or any writer?

It did not make him popular, for people love ornaments. They love the moss and mould and Virginia creepers of the mind, stifling thought and beauty. When an intellect like Butler's turns its light into accepted beliefs and theories which they hoped were long ago comfortably settled to repose, they scuttle about like beetles under a lifted stone. Butler never went the way to be liked, or even to be read. Towards the end of his life, he once showed me a carefully tabulated account of the sale of all his books, each on a separate column. He was an accurately careful man, so methodical as always to brush his hair with fifty strokes one way and fifty the other, and to smoke the same number of cigarettes each day. That account showed a considerable loss on every book of his except "*Erewhon*." On that he appears to have made nearly £70, and on the rest to have lost something over £900 in all. It is true that he adopted the dubious method of publishing at his own expense, because he could not endure waiting upon the pleasure or caprice or calculations of publishers, and so his books were not much "pushed." It is also true that "*The Way of All Flesh*" and the "*Note Books*" probably sold well, and he might have pocketed a little money off them. But he was dead.

So he never enjoyed "the rewards of literature" either in wealth or fame. Outside his very small circle of friends, and his little larger circle of admirers, he was regarded as a quaint and perverse person, given over to cranky and cantankerous notions, and chiefly occupied with the discovery of mares'-nests. There was much to embitter his nature. His childhood was more dismal and unhappy even than most childhoods in Christian families eighty years ago. From "The Way of All Flesh" we know that childhood and those detestable parents. His father was the typical clergyman of that date, and father and son disliked each other beyond the limits of nature and Commandments. The whole family, especially the sisters, were irritating beyond the limits of nature and the average family irritation. Butler was very careful about money, since money meant freedom; but through the advice of a great banker he lost nearly all he had made on his New Zealand sheep-run, and for many years was almost poor. His admired friend, Pauli, whom he met in New Zealand, brought to England, and steadily supported with a large allowance for thirty years, was proved after his death to have been a deliberate swindler, making a larger income at the Bar than Butler ever possessed, and receiving funds from other sources besides. Men of science scorned Butler's scientific theories, or adopted them without acknowledgment. Darwin had been friendly, but a violent personal quarrel arose, chiefly because the great man did not take the trouble to offer an easy explanation. Reputed scholars smiled at Butler's Homeric and Shakespearian theories as a joke, or took no notice of them. His paintings were usually rejected by the Royal Academy, and seldom

sold. His music was hardly even heard. Could any life seem more definitely a failure?

Yet he was not embittered. To many younger writers, like myself, he showed the sweetness and generosity of a nature that no personal disappointment could sour. Once when I was at home for an interval during the South African War, he asked me to come to the well-known chambers in Clifford's Inn and talk about the war. He called in "Alfred"—Alfred Cathie, that most trusty of friends and servants—to listen. He cleared the table, and asked me to explain the siege of Ladysmith, then only a few months old. With the help of a few books (he had not many books at any time) to illustrate the hills, and of matches to mark the guns on both sides, I managed fairly well. But I was far more interested in the man than in the siege. I thought him then looking older than his age, but the face was still full of animation and intelligence. It reminded me of a Greek comic mask. There was something of Socrates about it—something, therefore, of the satyr. One expected to see pointed ears covered with fur. The mouth opened like a comic mask, and the humorous or ironic wrinkles in the reddish face were like a mask as well. And then there were the satyr eyes—bluish or grey, I think, but very bright, gleaming with a genial malice or a malicious cheerfulness, but somehow revealing the sensitive shyness and melancholy common to humorists and monkeys and other wild animals. In many of the portraits given in the "Memoir," by Henry Festing Jones, one detects that satyr look, as in the frontispiece (by himself in 1878), and especially in the photograph by "Alfred" in 1898 (Vol. II, p. 282), which is Butler as I knew him,

though Alfred had probably polished him up to look respectable. The sense of attractive wild beast was increased by the short white beard and the thickets of black eyebrow. He spoke with a gentle voice and the courtesy called old-fashioned in all ages, because good manners are always scarce. He liked talking about his pictures, which hung thick on the walls (chiefly scenes of Italy and Sicily, if I remember), beautiful, but showing a touch of the amateur in spite of his long efforts and training. And he liked talking about his books. On that particular occasion he showed me a long review of his "Authoress of the *Odyssey*." The review had lately appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*, of which I was then literary editor, though probably he did not know that. It was headed "Miss Homer's Work," and though I am sure it was full of fine appreciation, he was rather vexed about the heading, and kept on saying, "That does me no good"; for he took his theory very seriously, as was right. So, as I had written the review, I was very sorry to have offended, and am now all the more pleased to read in this biography:—

In the course of the morning I went up into the town (Shrewsbury) to look at the papers, and found to my surprise the excellent review of "Erewhon" and "Erewhon Revisited" in the "Times," October 9th (on which day the books were published), and also the hardly less excellent review in the "Daily Chronicle." I knew that I ought not to say anything about these reviews to my sisters, but there are few so holy as to be able at all times to resist the temptation to rub a success in, although it is known that it will irritate.

That was in 1901, less than a year before he died, and it is something to know that he was pleased with my

*Chronicle* review after my offence about "Miss Homer's Work." Of course, I have long forgotten what I wrote about "Erewhon Revisited," but I thought at the time that the myth of the Sunchild, his mother Yram (Mary), and his ascent into heaven was a rather harsh burlesque on Christian doctrines. I talked of it with E. T. Cook, then my colleague and a friend of Butler, and he agreed with me. I am surprised, therefore, and partly pleased to read in one of Butler's own letters (Vol. II, page 338):—

Believe me, I never meant any allusion whatever to the Founder of Christianity. . . . I meant to suggest a parallelism, not between the Sunchild and Christ (which never even entered my head), but between the circumstances that would almost inexorably follow such a supposed miracle as the escape of the Sunchild, and those which all who think as I do believe to have accreted round the supposed miracle, not of the Ascension, but of the Resurrection. And I did not mean to poke fun at Christianity. Anything but.

Still there are many who must have been pained by the book. For there are always many who, like the farmers in "The Way of All Flesh," "are equally horrified at hearing the Christian religion doubted, and at seeing it practised."

Whatever his disappointments (largely due to the universal laziness which puts a man in a labelled pigeon-hole and keeps him there, Butler being labelled "Crank") —in spite of all, his life was far from unhappy. He delighted in his own work, and was concentrated upon it. He was never obliged to write anything he did not enjoy writing, or had to hurry over. He never wrote a review, or a leading article. He possessed a few most enviable friends, like Mr. Festing Jones, his close associate for nearly thirty

years, and now the author of one of the most careful, accurate, and affectionately complete biographies ever written. He was seldom ill. He used to the full the opportunities belonging to the epoch of the Happy Tourist, when one could travel without the plague of passports, and every decent and well-educated Englishman, with solid sovereigns in his pocket, was welcome in every land. For twenty years he enjoyed the closest intimacy with a simple-hearted and very intelligent Frenchwoman (who said of him: "Il sait tout; il ne sait rien; il est poète"). He had the kindly and generous spirit that usually characterises the cynic; and he was never penniless. But perhaps, after all, his most beneficent fortune lay in his long friendship with Eliza Savage, his fellow student at the art schools, and his admirer and adviser till her death in 1885. Her letters to him are a new and most valuable part of this absorbing biography. They remind one of Mrs. Carlyle's, and that is high praise. They are full of good sport, genial malice like Butler's own, and a fearless exposure of traditional absurdities. Her criticism of his work and of himself, though generally admiring, must have been often beneficent. The letters abound with instances of her wit, but the wit permeates them rather than allows of quotation. Yet one might give just three examples of her cheerful malice:—

Apropos of my enemies, I must just tell you this: The day that only my enemies were at the club, old Miss Andrews wished I might have a *good* husband. One could easily see that she was inwardly gloating over something very different. So I smiled sweetly and said: "Thank you, Miss Andrews; the same to you, and many of them."

P.S.—There are a great many hard words in the book ("Life and Habit"); but I don't mind them, for I have a dictionary which I bought two years ago, as I wished to read "Daniel Deronda" in the original.

Miss Pearson is going to nurse the wounded Russians; she went to nurse the wounded Servians, which was the reason why Servia so promptly made peace with Turkey. [In 1877.]

At one time she was probably willing, or even anxious, to marry Butler, but he would not. Unfortunately, in spite of her beautiful mind, she was not beautiful; and we all know how Herbert Spencer, for instance, when he contemplated George Eliot, indited the note: "To me Beauty is a *sine qua non*," though Spencer himself had less in the way of beauty to brag of than Butler had. After Miss Savage's death (from a slow cancer of which she never told him a word), Butler reproached himself, not so much for not having married her, as for his preoccupation with himself and his works during all their long friendship. Of his feeling for her he wrote on the day after her death:—

I never knew any woman to approach her at once for brilliancy and goodness. . . . It is not that I saw much of her—this I did not—but we were in constant communication, and, happily, for the last ten years I have preserved everything that she wrote—and she wrote nothing that was not worth preserving. It is out of the question that I can ever replace her.

And there is the sonnet written near the end of his own life, beginning:—

And now, though twenty years are come and gone,  
That little lame lady's face is with me still;  
Never a day but what, on every one,  
She dwells with me, as dwell she ever will.

In "The Way of All Flesh" many of her sayings are adopted for the character of Alethea Pontifex, which is said to be a study of herself, though she did not recognise it, and did not like it. Butler had little, if any, power of creating new people. "Vous allez créer," said a Russian woman to him in 1870, and soon afterwards he wrote "Erewhon," perhaps still the best known of his books, at least by name. But he did not possess the creative imagination, and he knew it. Mr. Festing Jones says that he also knew he was endowed, like Nausicaa, the lovely authoress of the "Odyssey," with the "kind of imagination which consists in wise selection and judicious application of material derived from life." He used to say: "Appropriate passages are intended to be appropriated." Whether, as he thought, that is the highest kind of imagination, I cannot say. One is sick to death of novelists who claim imagination because they libel their friends and enemies alike. But Butler's appropriation of his family and some of his other enemies is justified by a wit and penetration into character which those novelists never possess. And with that I must again take leave of that strange and stimulating figure (if one may still use "stimulating," that worn-out word)—a figure in our literature so characteristic of the ironic and rebellious English mind, and yet so unusual even in our history. As Dr. Garnett hinted to me, it is the man himself that is of the greatest value. And in these volumes one can feel again the man himself; for the Life is written with just that personal sympathy, complete exactness, and freedom from adornment which Butler would have chosen for the writing of it.

## XIV

### THE SON OF EARTH

**I**N one of Mr. Hardy's own illustrations to his "Wessex Poems," we see a Roman high road crossing a steep ridge of down, which rapidly falls into low-lying fields, and beyond them stretches the thin horizon of the sea, just broken by the cliffs of Portland. In the middle of the road, looking towards the sea, stands a lonely sentry, dressed in the uniform of Napoleon's time, and some miles away in front of him you can make out the little Georgian town of Weymouth.

The scene is very characteristic of the great author's work—the Roman road, the wide view, the distant sea, the little town, and the lonely figure standing between earth and sky. The Romans drove that road across the ridge of down already marked by the graves of an earlier savage race, and to the right of where that little sentry stands they built their camp among vast earthworks of warriors who have not left a name. It was this very point in the road that the mixed levies had reached when the news of Buonaparte's landing was contradicted, as is told in "The Trumpet-Major." And from that high ridge you may now look round upon a wide and beautiful country which one man's brain has inspired with a life more genuine than its own.

Extended among the fields, or folded in woods and little

valleys, there they all lie, the scenes of those delicate and human lives—the town of Casterbridge, the villages of Weatherbury, Mellstock, and Wellbridge, and behind them, like the edge of a dark and tossing sea, rise the sand-hills and fir woods of Egdon Heath. Or, if we look towards the sun, at our feet is the genteel watering-place of Budmouth, and tied to it by the narrow Chesil Beach stands the old and quarried Isle of Slingers. It hardly matters whether we call these places Dorchester, Puddletown, Stinsford, Weymouth, and Portland, or by the author's names. One thing only concerns us: they all breathe the very soul of Bathsheba, and Eustacia, and Tess; of Jude, and John Loveday, and Swithin; and of the Well-beloved's lover, who never could grow old.

The mere identification of places does not much matter. The books would have exactly the same value if there were no such places at all. But of no other part of England could Mr. Hardy have written as he has written of Wessex. I believe he thinks the general type of the English people, especially of the girls, is becoming more and more like his characters. I think so, too, and am heartily glad of it. That class which he most describes—an independent, lower-middle class, not fully educated, not quite exact in its grammar, but brought into touch with the realities of working life on the one side and with intellectual things on the other—that class in England is certainly gaining in humanity, in refinement, and in the subtleties of spirit and passion. But in Wessex people there is a further touch of something which you will not find, say, in Nottingham, or Northamptonshire. It is a sensitive and poetic quality, which the curious may trace to the absence of mines and

factories, or to the larger survival here of the British spirit, protected by heaths and forests from the invasions of stolid Germany all those centuries ago. I only know that among those West-country people Thomas Hardy himself was born and grew up, that a tablet in Dorchester Church celebrates the beneficence of a Thomas Hardy of Shakespeare's time, and that on a down west of Portland stands a monument to the Hardy of Nelson's "Victory."

He is no changeling, as most of us are, but has sucked the breasts of the earth that bore him, and the spirit of that beautiful mother, whom so few of us have time to know, has passed into him. In all his work there is something of the grave simplicity of places where man has lived long in close relationship to the ground and the seasons. Most of his characters have grown to be what they are by slow and gradual changes, like woods or the surface of downs. They are deep-rooted in far-off traditions, and behind them all we feel the underlying past. Their interests and difficulties lie in the ancient lot of mankind, as it was in the beginning and is now. They have the profound speech and half-unconscious humour of men not too harassed to observe the years—men to whom the world has not been narrowed by violent journeys and removals. In their drama of life, they make little more fuss than nature over birth and death and the varied fortunes between. This is no place for the "Comic Spirit" of cultured drawing-rooms, but humour and pathos are here at home—humour too near a neighbour to sorrow.

Into this quiet atmosphere of ancient life, Mr. Hardy loves to introduce a spirit touched from its birth by something alien, something that reaches out into a world of

different experience, whether for delight or intellectual need. Deep in such spirits some trace of precious but perilous substance lies, like a thin vein of gold which is not used for its own sake and spoils the building-stone for use. In his four greatest tragedies—in “*Tess*,” “*Jude*,” “*Far from the Madding Crowd*,” and “*The Return of the Native*”—we find it so. It is so in “*A Pair of Blue Eyes*,” “*The Hand of Ethelberta*,” and, very noticeably, in “*Two on a Tower*.” If his genius had been a few degrees less powerful and his success in literature less assured, we might have found the same half-frustrated nature in Mr. Hardy himself. In the very look of him one seems to detect the shy animal of heaths and woods—the offspring of earth, with ear always close to the ground. But into that primitive being the tormenting spark of intellect has entered. With pity and irony the rather sad eyes look out upon the brotherhood of mankind, so near the earth and so desirous of heaven, and all the face displays a curious sensitiveness—the same intense susceptibility to the piteousness of life that throws the shadow of the gallows across so many of his books, and prompted his protest against the use of horses upon the battlefield during the Boer War. It was the same sensitiveness that drove him to the description of the pig-killing in “*Jude*,” and feeds his indignation at any sport involving pain and death. Take away the mysterious gift of genius, and we can see this sensitiveness and longing for intellectual things rendering a man only peculiar and unhappy in English country life, while they might bring him very little further along the higher road. We should find a character well suited for one of Mr. Hardy’s own ironic and pitying tales.

Pity and irony—they are among the most prominent Spirits that watch the dramatic epic or “panoramic show” of the vast Napoleonic struggle displayed in “The Dynasts.” Condensation has a great attraction for him, as for all good writers. I believe this is at the root of his persistent practice of verse. A lyric is a short and finished thing; into three pages of verse it seems possible to cram the hundred thousand words of a novel. But for the necessities of sale and livelihood, Mr. Hardy would have written nothing but verse. That hunger compelled him to write prose must seem to us one of the sweet uses of adversity. But how tempting is brevity! Here, in three short volumes, we are given the etherealised spirit of whole libraries, and, as through the small end of a telescope, we behold once more the hosts of conquerors, the doom of kings, and the excited populations of European empires. The queer little figures run about; they love and hate, they laugh and cry, and make a fine to-do. Here creeps the white Austrian army with “a movement as of molluscs on a leaf.” There Napoleon shakes his little fist, and Pitt whispers his last great speech at the crisis of destiny. There goes Nelson with his ships, the passionate love in his heart and the penny cannon at the bow. There are the tiny villagers scrambling up their ant-hills to see a real match struck upon the tinder. They speak in ghosts of words. All is so tiny and dim that the squeaks of villagers and Emperors hardly differ in their value, and when they have said their little say, the clouds of time pass over them all alike. They vanish as changeful manifestations of the controlling Immanent Will, which may sometimes almost be discerned “as a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitch-

ing, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms."

To a writer like Swift such a conception of the foremost nations of the world squirming together like maggots in a cheese while the Immanent Will grinds along its way, probably unconscious, probably purposeless—such a conception would have been a theme for mockery and scorn. But in Mr. Hardy there is never a touch of either. Irony is there, but it is the Spirit of the Pities that is chiefly felt. There may be no solution to the ultimate problems of human life. Man may be moving about upon this dying dust-speck in the universe without principle and without purpose. Let it be so then. Let us refuse to be put off by the imaginations of any fool's paradise. But, at all events, within the limits of the life of men and women as we know it for certain, there is room enough for joy, and plenty of room for pity. That in the midst of our daily struggle from birth to death mankind should ever have conceived such things as laughter or beauty or goodness appears to me a far more marvellous thing than the finest supernatural miracle ever invented in all the mythologies.

It is for this love of a mankind intermingled with the earth and nature that we compare Hardy with Wordsworth. In spite of their country themes and country life—though, in fact, Mr. Hardy has probably spent nearly half his years in London—neither of them has any connection with idyllic art; their men and women have nothing in common with nymphs and swains. But both love the mankind that lies as close to the heart of earth as the grass and trees, and among men of low estate it is for the aristocracy of passion that both are always seeking—"the aristocracy

of passion," to use Walter Pater's fine phrase for the true patent of nobility.

That is what one thinks of when at times among the brilliant lights and fresh-flowering dresses of a summer afternoon one sees a shy and delicate figure passing down the Strand to hear some favourite old English service at St. Paul's; or when he moves among the shops and marketings of Dorchester, respected by all as a Justice of the Peace and owner of a house and garden—honoured by some even in his own country for the fame which is his right, because, since Wordsworth died, no one has heard the still, sad music of humanity with so fine an ear, and no English writer has ever expressed it in forms so poignant and dramatic.

## XV

## THE VOICE OF AMERICA

FROM America one might have expected a whole new hemisphere of thought and beauty—a whole new outburst of literature and art—something vital and strange, unlooked-for and full of fresh revelation, such as early Greece gave to the world. Here was an unknown and unexhausted continent, alluring with variety, dazzling with adventure. Here were people sprung from a noble stock, solemnised by religion, capable of seriousness, tempered by adversity, sharply confronted by the realities of common existence. If mixture vitalises, copious admixture came. The blood of Italy, of Spain, of Russia, of Ireland, and of old Judea—all imaginative and thoughtful races—was mingled with the blood that had produced the Elizabethans and the contemporaries of Milton. The land became the melting-pot of the intelligent world, and from a melting-pot one expects a new quality of metal boiling to be poured into new and beautiful moulds. There was nothing to hold or bind the thought and speech of the American people. Freed from the warping trammels of Kings, Courts, Nobles, and Churches, they could move and work and speak as they pleased, enjoying the conscious and delightful surprise of emancipated slaves. They could perceive a loveliness yet unchronicled, dwelling in

the sun or venturing into the obscure. Who would not have expected something rich and strange from such a radiant transformation?

Walt Whitman, born over a hundred years ago, has alone fulfilled that expectation. We know and love Thoreau, his freshness and exquisite nature. Certainly he was a great essayist, and, like Whitman, he was much besides a writer. We know and admire Emerson, his real wisdom, his pellucid air. We know the American novelists, and recognise in some a creative power. We know the American humorists, and recognise humour in some. We know the American poets. All these writers are pretty good, some are very good; but they have never yielded quite what one would have expected from a new continent and the melting-pot of great and imaginative peoples. None of them made quite a fresh start. Tradition is valuable, but perhaps it overwhelmed them. Perhaps they lacked courage. Americans are generally regarded as rather assertive and bumptious in opinion. I have not found them so. In literature they appear hesitating and intellectually timid. In criticism they have the courage only of other people's opinions. The New World has not redressed the balance of the Old. It has sat in the Old World's scale. Except for Whitman, the other scale would be almost empty. Hear Whitman, the first of Futurists, himself:—

Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia,  
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts,  
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and *Æneas'*, Odys-  
seus' wanderings,  
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy  
Parnassus,

Repeat at Jerusalem, place the notice high on Jaffa's gate and  
on Mount Moriah,  
The same on the walls of your German, French, and Spanish  
castles, and Italian collections,  
For know a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wide, untried  
domain awaits, demands you.

Only in Whitman do we catch a vision of that fresher sphere, that wide, untried domain. Only in him do we discover the literature of a new world. Not that he blindly admired America as it is: far from it. In one of his prose books (too little read) he says of his country:—

Never was there more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. . . . A scornful superciliousness rules in literature. The aim of all the *littérateurs* is to find something to make fun of. A lot of churches, sects, &c., the most dismal phantasms I know, usurp the name of religion. Conversation is a mass of badinage. From deceit in the spirit, the mother of all false deeds, the offspring is already incalculable. . . . The best class we show, is but a mob of fashionably dressed speculators and vulgarians.—("Collect: Democratic Vistas.")

Or hear what he says of Culture's centre itself:—

Of Boston, with its circles of social mummies, swathed in cerements harder than brass—its bloodless religion [Unitarianism], its complacent vanity of scientism and literature, lots of grammatical correctness, mere knowledge (always wearisome in itself)—its zealous abstractions, ghosts of reforms—there is at present little of cheering, satisfying sign.—("Collect: Notes left Over.")

Enough is there to account for the absence of that vital

freshness and liberated splendour which we demand. To quote once more from the "Collect":—

Touched by the national test, or tried by the standards of democratic personality, our writers wither to ashes. I say I have not seen a single writer, artist, lecturer, or what not, that has confronted the voiceless but ever erect and active, pervading, underlying will and typic aspiration of the land, in a spirit kindred to itself. Do you call those genteel little creatures American poets? Do you term that perpetual, pistareen, paste-pot work, American art, American drama, taste, verse? I think I hear echoed as from some mountain-top afar in the west, the scornful laugh of the Genius of these States.—("Democratic Vistas.")

In sharp contrast, Whitman uttered his "barbaric yawp." He had a vision of America—a vision of man's possible greatness—far different from the prettiness of picture-postcards and imitative verses. He went out from the shores and farms of Long Island to wander far through the States, printing, farming, writing for newspapers, teaching, living from day to day self-assured and imprudent as Christ or the lilies; careless of the laws, for he possessed all he wanted; careless of danger, for he possessed only himself; careless of Government, for no tax can be levied on the income of the soul. He made much, as he says, of negatives—the absence of pain, worry, anxiety, ambition, and hunger; much of daylight, the sky, the common scenes of outdoor life. "Give me health and a day," he might have cried with Emerson, "and I will make Emperors look ridiculous." He threw himself upon nature as upon a bride. Man in nature delighted him most—"powerful, uneducated persons"—sailors, fishermen, field-

labourers, backwoodsmen, shepherds, foresters, trappers, lightermen, dockers, carpenters, builders, blacksmiths, ferrymen, quarrymen, miners, all who have their grip upon nature, possessing the knowledge compared with which the culture of dapper gentlemen is silly. It is as silly as their substitutes for work—their complicated games at ball, their pulling of useless oars through water, and their luxurious slaughter of birds and beasts.

He was no mere Arcadian. He recognised modern life, and though in revolt against its horror, he wasted no time in lamentations, and despaired of no human soul. It sometimes seems as though he could have taken a Duke or a millionaire to his heart, however much to that person's embarrassment. As to the working man, driven and warped and crippled by the unending struggle for food:—

To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean;  
On his right cheek I put the family kiss,  
And in my soul I swear I will not deny him.

Though in ceaseless revolt, a boisterous optimism drove him to discover beauty and the passion of greatness in the world as a whole and as it is. But man in nature was the thing he loved. Men and women—free, eager, animated spirits, expressed in bodies strengthened and beautified by natural work—those he sought. No modern poet has spoken with such insistence and freedom of the beauties and natural joys of the body, and of the honour due to it as the expression of the soul. For this freedom he was often charged with immorality, and was once dismissed from some Government appointment by an official of whose morality we know nothing. The body of man or

woman, browned by the sun, salted by the sea, suppled by mowing, lean from the spade, stretched by the hammer, straightened by swinging the axe, hardened by pulling the ropes; sweaty, begrimed, rugged, and unwashed—to Whitman's eyes it had a beauty far beyond the reach of dainty and cloistered people who spend such a lot of life in trying to look beautiful and in keeping clean.

When he was forty-two, at the height of his productive power, the Civil War came. It was a boys' war, as all wars are, and perhaps he was thought too old to serve. But from first to last he accompanied the hospitals, followed the crows in search of the dead, held the wounded while the surgeons worked, tended fever and dysentery, sat silent for hours beside the sick just for companionship, and sent the last messages home. In "Specimen Days" he left an unequalled record of such service. In "Drum-Taps" he was the first poet to describe the reality of war. Much might be quoted, but for the present time let me quote only "Reconciliation":—

Word over all, beauty as the sky,  
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be  
utterly lost,  
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly  
softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;  
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,  
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw  
near,  
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the  
coffin.

Endowed with this universal sympathy, and with a personality generous as the air ("I do not give lectures or a

little charity," he said; "when I give, I give myself"), two things he demanded for mankind as he conceived it. One he called "Democracy," though indeed he was no political Democrat, but an Anarchist almost complete ("Where the men and women think lightly of the laws, where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons—there the great city stands"). By "Democracy" he meant an equality of spirit; not merely equality before God and Law and Church, which one or two people say we possess already; but an equality in the means of life, in work, and in heart and mind. Side by side with this, he demanded an individuality which is often thought to contradict Democracy. Individuality is the fulfilment of the personal soul, not trembling at gossip, nor terrified of falling in the social scale, nor keeping a sidelong eye upon the Law, nor alarmed at ridicule, nor creeping through life with a mind dressed in second-hand clothes. "Produce great persons! The rest follows," he cried; "Whoever you are, claim your own at any hazard"; "O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you!"

From a poet of such wealth of thought, such vital abundance of expression, it is hard to select a passage with which to sum up and conclude. Shall it be from "Children of Adam," or "A Song of Joys," or "Song of Myself," or "Starting from Paumanok," or "Salut au Monde," or "By Blue Ontario's Shore," or the "Song of the Open Road," or "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," or "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" or "O Captain! My Captain!"? Let it be from the "Song of the Broad-Axe":—

What do you think endures?  
Do you think a great city endures?

Or a teeming manufacturing State? or a prepared Constitution?  
or the best built steamships?

Or hotels of granite and iron? or any chefs-d'œuvre of engineering,  
forts, armaments?

Away! these are not to be cherished for themselves,  
They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians play for  
them,

The show passes, all does well enough, of course,  
All does very well till one flash of defiance.

A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,  
If it be a few ragged huts, it is still the greatest city in the  
whole world.

—How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed!

How the floridness of the materials of cities shrivels before a  
man's or woman's look!

## XVI

### NATURE'S PRIEST AND REBEL

IT is a hundred years (July, 1917) since Thoreau was born, and, even in these times, many who value life and freedom, and the literature which only life and freedom can produce, will celebrate the day with renewed hope and exhilaration of spirit. For in Thoreau we possess one of those few men who have come very close to the realities of nature, and by their criticism or defiance of society's accepted platitudes, have set the spirit free. Most of us know this unvulgarised American of French descent, this associate of the "Transcendentalists" who gave to Concord its cloistered and short-lived fame; this intimate friend of Emerson, the unerring thinker, whom he so far surpassed in vitality. We know that in vitality he has surpassed Emerson and, indeed, all the rest of America's "Transcendental" group, because he made it his object to live rather than to write, and from the studios and libraries of unerring thinkers and widely read novelists, who so admirably described life at second hand, he turned to the forest and the river, following the existence of the woodman or the settler, and confronting the actual labours and the stern or joyful phenomena of the open world with his own hands and eyes.

In consequence, those who are interested in literature

know him as the master of a solid and concrete style. We may watch it grow. From the essay on Carlyle—an excellent literary treatise, such as a careful and commonplace critic might have written for a good review—from that up to "Walden" or the "Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers," what a bound forward there is! How we feel that in the few intervening years the realities of life have converted the clever literary imitator into a man who has found his inborn power! "Walden" and the "Week" I, like other people, consider two of the most lovable books ever written upon nature. In them, as in all literature, the man is the style, and the man is worth our intimate knowledge, our intimate friendship. And yet, even after he had established by these two books the claim of a fine personality, he had still, as I believe, a higher service to perform, a further advance to make in the development of a noble nature and its revelation. For from the wild and delightful forest and river he came out into a drearily civilised world as the advocate of freedom and the avenger of her suppression.

For his observance of the birds and animals which lived around him by Walden pool, Thoreau has often been compared with White of Selborne; but the comparison is misguided. His knowledge of nature was far rather a poetic intimacy, like Wordsworth's, and though he watched nature with delighted intensity, his ultimate interest, like Wordsworth's, was in man—in the common course of human life, and in the preservation of human freedom, whether from the pressure of the State or from the dulness of habit. If it be objected that Wordsworth forsook the cause of freedom when age chilled his heart with ap-

prehensions, we may find in Edward Carpenter a closer comparison, at least in so far as a doggedly constant faith in liberty may go. It was to free the human spirit by simplicity that Thoreau built his log hut in the forest. First he would free his own spirit, and through his own (the only means) he would work upon the world:—

I went to the woods [he writes in "Walden"] because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

With this object, he sought to deliver himself from all that is unessential. "I grew in those seasons like corn in the night," he says of his life at Walden. Such growth is only to be won by simplicity, and the means by which he won it would serve others equally with himself. Under the burden of laws, customs, and possessions, the mass of men, he said, lead lives of quiet desperation. And, again (also in "Walden"), "the commonest sense is the sense of men asleep, which they express by snoring." As to property and the servitude which it imposes upon the soul, one remembers those characteristic sentences: "He was a lucky fox that left his tail in the trap. The muskrat will gnaw his hind leg off to be free." And to expose the absurd burden of rank and grandeur, take his ridicule of even Egyptian dynasties:—

As for the Pyramids, there is nothing to wonder at in them so much as the fact that so many men could be found degraded enough to spend their lives constructing the tomb for some ambitious booby, whom it would have been wiser and manlier to have drowned in the Nile and then given his body to the dogs.

A fine slap at the dignity of ancestral kings and all the fuss of royalty! But my own favourite sentence in all "Walden" has long been a protest against the burden of philanthropy:—

There is no odor [it runs] so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted. It is human, it is divine, carrion. If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life as from that dry and parching wind of the African deserts called the simoon . . . for fear I should get some of his good done to me—some of its virus mingled with my blood.

He would welcome savagery rather than modern civilisation. There was, perhaps, something savage in his blood, or he liked to imagine it:—

Once or twice [he writes] while I lived at the pond, I found myself ranging the woods, like a half-starved hound, with a strange abandonment, seeking some kind of venison which I might devour, and no morsel could have been too savage for me. . . . I like sometimes to take rank hold on life and spend my day more as the animals.

Self-consciousness and affectation are the perils lying in wait for such a mode of life and thought. The "Transcendentalists" dwelt with those perils lurking on either hand, and did not escape them. Even Thoreau, who ran to the wilderness from Concord (one and a half miles), did not altogether escape them. In such a passage as this we hear too plainly the "Transcendental" note of conscious superiority:—

The most glorious fact of our experience is not anything we have done or may hope to do, but a transient thought, or vision, or dream, that we have had.

Less dangerous in affectation, but still on the edge of self-consciousness, is the Roman sentence, reminding one of Seneca: "It is hard to have a southern overseer; it is worse to have a northern one; but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself." Slave-driver! Thus suddenly we come upon the word which ensured Thoreau's deliverance from the speculation and inactive benevolence of the "Transcendental" clique. Here lies the secret impulse which drove him forward to that final and immeasurably nobler development of which we spoke. Here we see him standing alone, illumined by the fire of a holy indignation, deserted by his superior and theoretic friends, violently opposed even by that "Abolition Committee" which was founded and supported by subscriptions, with the express object of maintaining the cause for which Thoreau fought. How plainly anyone who has taken some share in our own public life can realise it all! We see Thoreau first entering into a contest with the injustice of the State as a tax-resister. Like our own tax-resisters, he refused to pay money for the support of a State where injustice prevailed. Like them, he went to prison rather than compound with crime. "Under a government which imprisons anyone unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison," he says in a sentence now inscribed upon banners through the world. Of his imprisonment he writes:—

As I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and bones and blood to be locked up. . . . I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great

waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my towns-men had paid my tax.

It reminds one of that great scene in the "Bacchæ," where Dionysus is imprisoned, and the walls of the gaol fall flat around him; for who can confine the spirit of a god? There is an old story that Emerson, coming to visit his friend in prison, exclaimed, "Thoreau, why are you here?" and Thoreau replied, "Emerson, why are not you?" Invented or not, that story exactly illustrates the difference between the two men, and shows why we hold the one in chilly reverence, and earnestly love the other.

One last step on his progress to greatness Thoreau was yet to take, only three years before he died. It was the speech known as "A Plea for Captain John Brown," delivered at Concord in October, 1859, while it was still uncertain whether John Brown of Harper's Ferry was already hanged or not. I believe it to be one of the greatest speeches ever delivered among mankind, all the greater because it contains no rhetorical eloquence. Courage, indignation, and profound seriousness alone distinguish it, and they alone compose the only eloquence worth a turn of the head. Here, again, we English people who have known scenes so similar—how intimately we can comprehend the scorn and passion of that plea! How well we know those moderate and constitutional opponents of slavery who spoke of John Brown and his followers as "deluded fanatics," "mistaken men," "insane and crazy disturbers of the peace"! It is with a true irony that Thoreau "turns from these slanderers to the testimony of John Brown's more truthful but frightened gaolers and hangmen"; for, indeed, it is usually the gaolers and hangmen

who best appreciate the victims of the State. And with what splendour of courage did Thoreau at such a moment, and among a people half paralysed by fear and greed, say of the so-called traitor: "He did not value his bodily life in comparison with ideal things"; "He could not have been tried by a jury of his peers, because his peers did not exist"; "I rejoice that I live in this age: that I am his contemporary"; or again, in Thoreau's finest and most characteristic manner:—

I hear many condemn these men because they are so few. When were the good and the brave ever in a majority? Would you have had him wait till that time came?—till you and I came over to him? . . . These alone were ready to step between the oppressor and the oppressed. Surely they were the very best men you could select to be hung. That was the greatest compliment which this country could pay them. They were ripe for her gallows. She has tried a long time, she has hung a good many, but never found the right one before.

So John Brown was hanged—"such a man," says Thoreau, "as it takes ages to make, and ages to understand." It did not take the State ages to hang him; but, as is well known, the State could never kill the soul which went marching on. The State and all its officials—its Presidents, Judges, Attorney-Generals, gaolers, and hangmen—may have belonged to that enormous host whose souls lie mouldering in the grave while their bodies go marching on. But John Brown enlisted in a different army from theirs, and by his side Thoreau's soul will always march.

## XVII

### HIS FIRST DERBY

**W**HEN Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, got up one Wednesday morning and saw it was raining hard, he was inwardly glad. He did not want to hurt his friend Chesham, but still less did he want to go in a motor.

“Smell, noise, dust, goggles, possibly a green veil—no!” he said to himself. “Besides Chesham is a sportsman; he was talking about the secret of riding yesterday in the office, and I’m a little shy on sporting affairs. It’s queer one should be. But the rain settles it. Now I can go quietly by train like a human creature among common humanity.”

And the milkman, seeing him start in a new brown waterproof, said he looked all right. To which his house-keeper replied: “No matter for what he put on, there’s nothing as would make my gentleman look all right for the Durby, heaven help him!”

Common humanity in the train had a very unusual appearance to Mr. Clarkson. He seemed in a foreign country, among a clean-shaven, heavy-jawed, small-eyed race, not in the least like the people he knew. “Where are these men when it isn’t Derby Day?” he asked himself, but had soon forgotten them in his newspaper’s leader on the Colonial Conference Report. Suddenly the human creature at his

side asked him what was that paper's fancy. "Oh, it never has any fancy," he answered; "that's its chief weakness."

Gently but firmly the man took the paper from his hand and turned the page. "Why, where's the sportin' news?" he asked.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Clarkson. "I'm afraid I threw that sheet away before we started."

"My God!" said the man quietly, but with infinite pity, and, handing back the paper, he stared silently between his feet for the rest of the journey.

Getting out at Epsom Station and driving to the course in an eighteenpenny brake, Mr. Clarkson felt a little depressed and lonely. His companions continued to study the race-cards or sporting columns, and their brief conversation run entirely on the past achievements of horses unknown in the Education Office. He almost wished Chesham had been there to throw over him the protection of a sporting manner. But the glory of the sun bursting through soft clouds, and the interest of common humanity tramping in thousands along the road, or being dragged in every kind of cart, cheered his spirits, and as they reached the top of the down and the blue distance of Surrey extended before them, he stood up in his place and cried, "Oh, what a glorious view!" Whereupon the whole carriageful stared at him as though he had been a maniac.

To recover his position, he remarked that the advertisement kites flying thick in the air added a new horror to existence, but this had no soothing effect. He was glad to get out and be alone again among the crowd. It was early, and the course was crammed with people, whose ideas of enjoyment appeared to Mr. Clarkson bewildering in

variety. Rings were formed round conjurors, athletes, tipsters, stilt-walkers, and, almost thickest of all, round a preacher, who, with interludes of hymns on a clarinet, was pouring out a realistic description of the Derby race for heaven. Up and down the people thronged and wandered. The gentle slopes of the down were black and white with mankind. The flags fluttered, the tents shone, and the sweet wind blew, bearing with it the innumerable noise of voices.

"I really rather like this," thought Mr. Clarkson. "I feel like Faust among the Easter crowd. Here I am man; here one may be human. This is the true democracy." And he joined the thick concourse which had just turned all its faces one way to gaze at the stand where it was rumoured the King was about to appear.

But lunch soon occupied every thought, and Mr. Clarkson roamed among the drags, motors, gipsy vans, bars, and stalls, unobtrusively composing what he called an Aristophanic ode out of the multitudinous articles that men and women were devouring to support their strength. "The ancients," he thought, "described the stomach as a thrifty thing. To me its outbursts of prodigality are far more remarkable. Why can it accommodate quite twenty times more than usual to-day because a few horses are about to compete in a trial of speed?"

But he had only just fitted pork-pies, salad, and whelks into his ode when his attention was distracted by the outcries of conspicuous figures, who, in amazing hats and belts, were proclaiming their own high reputation for prophecy and integrity. He listened with bewilderment. "Three to one bar one, five to one bar two 'orses!" "I'll

take six pound or more, six pound or more I'll take!" "Nine to one bar one!" "Ten to one Bezonian!" What could it all mean? "It's no good; I never could do mathematics," he murmured to himself.

But, happily, at that moment he saw Chesham, with a carefully dressed party, making his way to an enclosure. He followed, paid, and entered. After greetings, he eagerly enquired, "I say, Chesham, you're a sporting man, you can explain it all to me. What do these men mean by shouting 'three to one bar one,' or 'five to two on the field'? Here's a man actually saying, 'I'll take ten to one, I'll take fifty to forty.' I was never any good at mathematics, but I do know that those two propositions cannot be identical!"

"All right, old man," Chesham answered hurriedly; "those are only the bookies, you know. It's their way of doing business. It is all quite simple when once you understand it. But there's no need to ask about it quite so loud. I'll try to explain it to you in the office to-morrow. Look, there's a horse doing his canter!"

"So there is!" said Mr. Clarkson. "But how badly the man rides! You told us yesterday the secret of riding was to sit well back in the saddle. That man is right over the horse's neck, and he doesn't sit at all. Why, he's balancing on his stirrups! If one of them broke, he would have a serious fall. I declare, you could see daylight under his trousers! It must be very painful to you to witness such an exhibition."

But Chesham had vanished with his friends, and Mr. Clarkson missed the first two races in trying to puzzle out the odds on a piece of paper.

Then, with both hands, he clung to his place at the iron railings, and the crowd grew serious. One by one the Derby horses were led past with long white tapes. They turned to canter to the start. Comments were brief but frequent. "Which is the favourite horse, please?" asked Mr. Clarkson. His neighbour glanced with silent contempt, but thought better of it and said, "Red cap. Like him?" "To me they all look very good horses," Mr. Clarkson answered modestly. "But that one seems to be moving its hind legs a little stiffly," and he pointed to Orby.

In his heart he was wondering whether the horses and jockeys were as terrified with excitement as he had been when he went in for "Greats" at Oxford, and longed to walk in any other direction than to the Schools.

But second by second time went on. All came as he had read in the years when he was a boy—the hush, the cry at the start, the hush renewed, the vision of flickering forms far away on the hill, the sudden apparition of things coming round the corner, small and noiseless as mice, the deep roar of the crowd sounding nearer and nearer, a rush and flutter of men and horses, one horse close against the side, running straight and sure, another close beside it with nose past the saddle and seeming to gain, a third running wild and large, then a bunch of others, invisible, unnoticed. It was tremendous, flashing, intense! "A hundred to one! Five to two!" shouted Mr. Clarkson, and it was over.

He returned to his flat in a glow of extended sympathy. On getting more than his fare at the door, the cabman remarked, "Good race, sir?" "Yes," said Mr. Clarkson, "I think it might be called a good race. A light brown

horse was very nearly overtaken by a dark brown horse. In fact, I thought it would be beaten. A good race, certainly."

"You don't 'appen to remember them 'orses' names, I suppose, sir?" asked the cabman with innocent irony.

"No, I'm afraid I didn't observe that," said Mr. Clarkson, "but perhaps this *Westminster* will tell us."

"Well, I'm damned," muttered the cabman, meditatively driving away, "and I've knowed the places these three hours past!"

## XVIII

### HIS FIRST MUSIC HALL

“JOYLAND: Admission Free.” That was the inscription Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, read over a flaring entry in a vulgar street as he passed homeward one Tuesday evening. It was but a children’s peepshow at a penny a peep, but something liberal and expansive in the announcement set Mr. Clarkson thinking; as, indeed, most things did, for his mind was never unduly occupied.

“Where do *you* go for joy?” he asked his landlady abruptly, as she peered out at him in the passage, gathering the ends of her black shawl over her figure.

“Please, sir, I don’t go nowheres now,” she answered, “through not wishin’ to demean myself. But I *have* taken amusement in bygone days.”

“Swift said amusement is the happiness of people who don’t think,” said Mr. Clarkson, going up the stairs.

“Indeed it is, sir; you’re quite right,” replied the landlady; “and the music ‘alls is the best place to go for it, I’ve always heard say, more especially when you get a free seat for putting up a card in your shop window.”

“It is strange how many departments of human interest remain a sealed book to me,” thought Mr. Clarkson, as he sat dining in solitude an hour or two later. “Music

halls! Fellows used to go up from Oxford and come back talking about Jolly Nash or Maud Branscombe, or some such people. And I've never been to a music hall in my life. I will go. I will not shut me from my kind. I will behold the innumerable laughter of the human ocean!"

"What is laughter?" he meditated, as he went past Charing Cross. "I dimly remember Aristotle said it was a thing that is out of time or place, but without danger. Incongruity with no risk, in short. Certainly a kind of antithesis appears to be required before the pleasant spasms which we call laughter can be produced. I think Emerson similarly defined it as the intellect's perception of discrepancy. But no definition gives us its nature so finely as old Hobbes's phrase about laughter as a sudden glory. It has been called a specially human faculty, and to describe man as 'the laughing animal' was once a favourite definition. But apes may be said to laugh, and I have heard of the men who grin like a dog and run about the West End. We cannot even be certain whether or not the faculty stands high among human characteristics. The negro laughs more than all mankind, and next to him, I think, the Englishman. It has been called a heavenly thing, if it comes from the heart. Yet I can hardly imagine Isaiah laughing, or Dante either."

"Standing room only!" said the man at the ticket office; so Mr. Clarkson took three shillings' worth of standing room and entered. From floor to roof the great theatre was crammed with human beings, and from his position at the side near the stage, Mr. Clarkson looked at line upon line of pinkish, whitish, yellowish faces, with little black specks for eyes and mouths, all fixed in the same

direction, all tremulous not to miss a point in the distresses of a broken-down motor. The owner raged, the little boy lectured, the chauffeur maintained his calm; passers-by displayed a mechanician's interest; one of them struck a match on the machine, and sauntered on. Loud roared the innumerable laughter of the human ocean.

"A fine instance of incongruity without danger," cried Mr. Clarkson to an intelligent youth beside him. "A very fine instance! That's what makes people laugh."

The youth turned and looked at him, thought of asking him for a light, but asked somebody else.

The next turn was a dance, and then came acrobats, and then a "sentimental" song, and then some rapid horse-play. Mr. Clarkson's spirits began to sink, and he wondered how long he could endure the luxury of human sympathy if this was to be its price. "Carlyle must have suffered something like this, that one time he went to the opera," he reflected. "But what precision is here, what delicacy of power, what infinity of pains! And all to amuse! If our Cabinet Ministers trained themselves to this perfection, what a nation we should be!"

He stopped to pick up a handkerchief the girl beside him had dropped, and as she smiled genially, he continued his memories of Carlyle's words to her aloud: "'From a Psalm of Asaph to a seat at a London music hall, what a road have men travelled!'"

"Oh, you've come up from the country, have you?" said the girl sweetly. "Welcome, little stranger!"

A comedian, kneeling in front of the conductor, was teaching the audience a chorus consisting almost entirely of the words: "You, you, you!" and ending with the dozen

letters of the alphabet that precede the vowel "U." The girl was so convulsed with laughter that she could hardly stand.

"Why do you laugh at that?" asked Mr. Clarkson with friendly curiosity.

"Because it's so funny!" gasped the girl.

"But why is it funny?" urged Mr. Clarkson.

"Because it makes me laugh!" replied the girl, stumbling through the chorus again.

"I suspect there is cause for laughter in the mere repetition of imbecility," said Mr. Clarkson. "I remember at Oxford they used to sing a rhyme about a young grandee of Spain, who always was sick in the train—not once and again, but again and again—and again, and again, and again."

"Oh, Lord! Wherever was you brought up?" cried the girl, affecting to be shocked.

But Mr. Clarkson was already listening to an altercation between the comedian, now dressed as an old village dame, and a supposed fireman. The fireman was telling how he rescued a family of mother and children from a burning housetop. "Now," he cried threateningly to the old lady, "now do you call me a coward?"

"No," said the dame placidly, "you're not a coward. You're a liar." And the house roared.

"Are you any relation to the collier's dying child?" she went on.

One solitary peal of laughter went up from the standing room of the stalls. The whole house turned to see who it could possibly be. It was Mr. Clarkson. It stopped abruptly, as a lark's song stops. The girl turned away to

show she had no connection with him. Mr. Clarkson tried hard not to look round as though in search of the offender, and consoled himself by reflecting on the fleeting fashion of laughter, how the Homeric gods laughed at deformity, and the Middle Ages at madmen, and Spanish kings at dwarfs, and African natives at dying agonies, and Americans at "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch."

But a sudden hush had fallen on the theatre. The orchestra gave out the *motif* of a tune that Mr. Clarkson had heard on street organs, and, amid a thunder of applause, another comedian entered.

"Who may *this* be?" Mr. Clarkson asked of the intelligent youth.

"Go along with you!" was the youth's reply, and for about twenty minutes the whole vast audience listened and breathed together, with the concentrated adoration of one worshipper. Their eyes were fixed, their muscles rigid; they hardly dared to laugh or cheer for fear of missing a word or gesture of their hero—their bare-kneed Highlander, their drunken Scot, their wandering sailor, their mountaineer in love. When he had gone and the raging storm of delight howled for him back in vain, the intelligent youth, transfigured into a kind of ecstasy, cried with contemptuous triumph to Mr. Clarkson, "What do you think of *that* now, governor?"

"I recognise an unquestionable capacity for comedy," Mr. Clarkson replied. "The man is genial; he has something of the Dickens touch—something of the irresistible appeal, as when Mr. Snodgrass asked Mr. Winkle what made his horse go sideways, and Mr. Winkle replied, 'I cannot imagine.' He is assisted also by a clear voice, a

Scottish accent, and a countenance naturally solemn. One feels that, like Carlyle's 'wretched spiritual nigger,' he is capable of better things. One feels that the story about Carlini might be true of him. You remember how a Neapolitan doctor advised a patient who was suffering from terrible mental depression, to go and see Carlini and laugh it off, and how the patient replied, 'I am Carlini.' What is more, this comedian selects subjects of universal humour. Among mankind there appear to be a few perennial jests—the drunken man, the mother-in-law, perhaps seasickness, the innocent lover, and a few others. 'Not so bad,' said the man who threw a stone at a dog and hit his mother-in-law; the story is Greek, and has survived two thousand years of growing wisdom. So these excellent comedians to-night, though hardly perhaps of the highest comic genius, still \_\_\_\_\_"

"Oh, forget it!" said the intelligent youth, breaking in; "you've done nothing but talk putrid rot since you came, and you'd better shut it. Did you hear that song about the black hen as laid a white egg, and when someone said there wasn't anything very wonderful in that, he was told:—

It mayn't be very much, old chap,  
But it's more than *you* could do.

Now, that's what I say to you, governor: you'd best go home to bed, for this here's a darned sight more than you could do."

"I admit it, I admit it only too freely," said Mr. Clarkson, and with a cheerful good-night he went.

## XIX

### HIS FIRST VOYAGE

**T**O Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, it was a moment of great mental excitement. The ship was entering the Straits of Gibraltar. Other passengers, proud of nautical experience, had repeated since breakfast that she was making for the Gib. To Mr. Clarkson she was about to pass between the Pillars of Hercules. All his life he had longed to sail that classic sea, to behold the coasts that Virgil knew, to touch the very waves once ploughed by the keels of epic wanderers and heroes. Within the narrow length of that purple Mediterranean, all that was to him most valuable in the world's history had been thought or enacted. Outside the strict limits of its shore were uncouth things, unmeasured and unredeemed. Here was the one scene where human faculty had reached perfection; here was the Mother Church of human intelligence, outside which no salvation could be found. On the one hand he now saw the red mountains of Africa, drawn like a veil before barbaric degradation; on the other hand was Spain, and the city he called Gades, and the homes of shy Iberians. The sea was purple flecked with white. He was entering the very gates of a temple where every stone bore the touch of immemorial sanctitude. To him it was a moment of the highest mental excitement.

"Take your entrance for the sweep on the run?" said a Jewish voice close beside him.

"I beg your pardon. What sweep? What run?" said Mr. Clarkson, with eyes fixed on the ghosts of Tyrian galleys.

"Two shillings for a draw in the sweep on the ship's run," said the voice. "I'm the auctioneer."

"Oh, if two shillings ends it," said Mr. Clarkson with alacrity, "here you are!"

The voice passed on, and he looked along the deck. The first-class passengers, comforted by having emerged from the Bay, which Mr. Clarkson thought of as the stream of Ocean, were stretched on deck chairs reading novels and magazines, and some of the ladies were doing fancy work, while stewards went from one to another offering cups of beef-tea to bridge over the yawning gulf between nine o'clock breakfast and half-past one lunch.

Turning to a dignitary of the Church who was reclining next to him, and from time to time explaining the points in *Tit Bits* to his wife, Mr. Clarkson remarked: "If you had your choice, wouldn't you rather have been Ulysses than anyone who ever lived?"

"Ulysses?" said the clergyman with some astonishment. "A most unsettled life, if I remember right, and not altogether free from blame in certain respects which we need not further particularise."

"We are now," Mr. Clarkson continued, "on the very scene of that passage which has always appeared to me one of the greatest in literature, where Ulysses called to his men not to die without knowledge of the unpeopled land beyond the sunset. 'Remember whence you are sprung,' he said; 'you were not born to live like cattle,

but to follow valour and knowledge!'—it is impossible not to add, 'like a sinking star.' And so they rowed on till night saw the other pole with all its constellations, and in the far distance a dim mountain appeared. Then three times round went their gallant ship, and the sea closed over them. Commentators always assume that Dante intended the Mount of Purgatory by that dim mountain, but really I see no sufficient reason to suppose it, do you?"

"Ah, as to that," replied the clergyman, "I haven't quite made up my mind yet about Purgatory. It is a point rather difficult of satisfactory solution. But you must excuse me from discussing it now, for between the eighth and seventeenth Sundays after Trinity I make a rule of allowing my mind to relax. Even the best field, you know, must lie fallow at times."

"Yes, indeed," said his wife. "I have to keep a careful watch upon the archdeacon. He reads and reads. He's always reading, and even when he's not reading he's working his brain."

"Now, Mr. Clarkson, I'll take you on at Bull," said the bright voice of the girl who sat next him at dinner. "It isn't Sunday to-day, so the captain can't object to us taking up the deck."

"Considerate la vostra semenza:  
Fatti non foste a viver come bruti,"

Mr. Clarkson repeated to himself, as he began to throw flat discs on to a board marked with numbers. "It is really Virgilian. But then I have often thought Virgil was not properly a Roman poet, but the first Italian."

"Oh, Mr. Clarkson," cried the girl, "you've got a Bull

instead of ten! Now you'll have to go back to the very beginning. Hooray! I mean, I'm so sorry!"

But Mr. Clarkson had ceased to play. The great mass of Gibraltar was just becoming visible as they rounded Tarifa. There it stood, dim in misty heat, shaped like a couchant lion, true doorpost of the ancient world.

"Rotten hole!" said the young man beside him, carefully adjusting his Zeiss glasses to look at it. When he had gazed for a time, he put the glasses carefully away and again said, "Rotten hole!"

"You mean it is no longer invulnerable, owing to the increased range of artillery?" said Mr. Clarkson; "but I should have thought 'rotten' too strong a word to express the situation."

"I mean it's a rotten hole to be stationed in," the other replied with some asperity. "No sport, barring a bit of fox-hunting in the cork woods, over there."

"Spanish foxes any good?" said an elder man, turning his glasses to the woods indicated, as though expecting to see the Spanish foxes running about. "Poor sport these foreign foxes seem mostly. Not had the training of our foxes at home."

"It is doubtful how far acquired mental characteristics are hereditary," observed Mr. Clarkson, not wishing to be excluded from the conversation of sportsmen.

The older man looked at him for a moment, and then slowly repeated: "Foreign foxes not had the training of our foxes at home. Same with dogs. There's no man in the country works so hard as an M.F.H. Always training, training, training. Always looking after this and that. No end to his labour. Perhaps he gets six weeks or so clear

from middle of May to end of June. Then he's at it again practising the puppies. Talk of labouring men! My word, a labouring man isn't in it with an M.F.H.!"

"I've always heard that sporting hounds are peculiarly unintelligent," said Mr. Clarkson, sympathetically.

"Unintelligent!" growled the older man. "My word, I'd rather be a hound than an archbishop! Wouldn't you, sir, wouldn't you?" he asked, defiantly.

"Well," said Mr. Clarkson, anxious to soothe, "the choice had hardly occurred to me before, either contingency appearing so remote. But, no doubt, a hound's existence has its compensations."

"Rather be a hound than an archbishop!" repeated the older man, moving slowly away. "By Jove, I should rather think I would!"

"Oh, look!" cried Mr. Clarkson, eagerly, "a flying fish! What a glorious creature! Isn't it like a Japanese toy?"

"Don't think much of sea fish," said the young officer. "They're no better than rabbit-shooting."

"But how marvellous that extension of fins into wings!" said Mr. Clarkson. "What a pity mankind didn't follow the same process, and develop wings instead of arms!"

"Oh, we're good enough for most people as we are," said the girl, throwing down the Bull discs and walking away.

In the evening the great rock stood black and solemn as they slowly left it behind, and the light on Europa Point was greenish white against the sunset. The passengers celebrated their first concert on board, followed by an informal dance. During the concert a lady who had become conspicuous for leaving scent bottles and shawls on

various chairs, fixed her fervent eyes on Mr. Clarkson while she sang:—

Less than the dust upon thy chariot wheel,  
Less than the rust that never stained thy sword.

“I was sure you loved music,” she said, clasping her hands as she sat beside him afterwards.

“I do indeed,” said Mr. Clarkson. “I like Bach best, because his music is that of the morning stars when they sang together. But I enjoy even comparatively inferior compositions like the thing you sang so well just now. While I listened it set me wondering.”

“Wondering? Oh, wondering what?” asked the lady, with half-closed eyes.

“I was wondering,” he answered, “how far it was possible for a lyric poet or composer to express a dramatic situation so entirely alien to his accustomed surroundings. It is a question that really involves most imaginative work.”

“Oh,” said the lady.

“It is the same with dancing,” Mr. Clarkson continued, as the band struck up the first waltz. “Originally, I suppose, it was a dramatic expression of triumphant joy or yielding and peaceful emotions. I often wonder how much of those feelings are retained in its present form.”

“Don’t you dance?” asked the lady.

“It is one of the great regrets of my life,” said Mr. Clarkson, “that I was not allowed to learn.”

“Oh,” said the lady, and her partner led her away.

A man came and informed him that a hotel in Jamaica was the best place to go to if you wanted to be done well,

and that he himself would once have gone to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico had not the ship been made of Swedish steel. Escaping with the silent wish that Swedish steel had never been invented, Mr. Clarkson sat long in the bow and watched the dark water of that historic sea, while over his head Orion and all the ancient stars moved in their courses. But, though surrounded by the long-expected scene itself, he was somehow restless and uneasy. The throb of harp and fiddle reached his ears, and his spirit kept time to the rhythm of the dancing feet. The memory of some peculiar scent seemed to hang about him. When he tried to see only the Pleiades, he saw a woman's eyes intently fixed on his, and a hand resting upon the arm of a chair. He several times repeated the great salutation to Italy in the Georgics, and then, feeling a little calmer, he thought he would go to bed, as it was getting quite late.

The dancing had ceased some time before, but as he went down the deserted gangway he heard footsteps patterning after him.

"Please, sir," said a panting steward, "there's a lady passenger on the companion would like to speak to you a moment."

Mr. Clarkson's heart gave one great leap. Never had he run so fast since he won the Consolation Race at school. She was standing at the top of the stairs.

"Is it possible?" he gasped. "Did you send for me? The steward told me you wanted to see me. Perhaps you've lost something?"

"Oh, no, no, no! Not *you!* Not *you!*" she cried, and vanished.

As he brushed his wavy hair before getting into his

bunk, Mr. Clarkson perceived that it might now almost be called grey, and somehow he could not recover his first joy in the memories of antiquity, though he heard the Mediterranean herself lapping against the ship's side till he slept.

## XX

### HIS FIRST SKI

M R. CLARKSON was tremulously happy. It is true he was in an electric train, heated like a tepid Limbo, and he would much rather have been on foot or in a sledge. But he could not with decency take more than a fortnight's holiday from the Education Office at this time of year without reducing the solid weeks of the summer vacation, when he intended to visit all the cathedrals in France. So for the sake of speed he used the train, and he tried to imagine it did not exist. Once in his boyhood he had been up this Alpine valley, long before the railway was made, and since then he had always desired to penetrate the Alps in winter. Surely something of that old mystery, that sweet remembered passion of delight must linger about them still! Though in an electric train, he was now penetrating the Alps, and it was winter. He was tremulously happy.

At Geneva a driving snow had hidden the distant mountains, but he was among them now, and the clouds were fading away in transparent film, allowing the morning sun to gleam upon sudden visions of snowy crest and brown precipice, unimaginably high. At their foot the long slopes of pines covered the buttresses of the central chain, and in front, among the snowy fields, were huddled little vil-

lages of wooden houses—mere human dwelling-places with roofs for covers, but full of contrivances against the cold, and fitted with lofts and storerooms for the food of men and cattle. Here was the scene that Mr. Clarkson had loved from boyhood; here were the mountains, woods, and streams which had haunted him like a passion. “The walls of lost Eden,” he quoted to himself, from Ruskin’s first sight of the Alps—“The walls of lost Eden could not have been more beautiful to us; not more awful, round heaven, the walls of sacred Death.”

And through the wild glory of mountain and cloud he heard more plainly than in boyhood the still, sad music of humanity. Here were the barriers of Europe, enshadowed still by the memories of heroes and peoples and moving hosts. Here were the places of which poets had sung, and in these solitudes they, too, had found for their hearts a savage consolation. Here the shy peasantry had lived for freedom, in gloom, but also in glory; and in these habitations, almost as unchanging as the mountain heights, they still lived on. He tried to recall the noble lines beginning:—

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,  
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice.

But before he could get the third verse right another voice by his side suddenly exclaimed: “It’s simply outrageous!”

The speaker looked up defiantly from his paper, as though daring the eternal heavens to contradict him. “Only a week ago,” he cried, “I had a letter in the *Times* protesting against the abominable misconduct of the railways to Switzerland. My own sister-in-law had registered

her luggage through from here to Victoria, and though she had time to drive across Paris and have breakfast at the other station, that luggage missed her train, and she had to wait two and a half whole hours for it in London, though she lives at Harrow! And here's a man writes to-day to say she was lucky not to have to stay a whole night in Paris, as his aunt did! Now, can you imagine anything more scandalous than that?"

"Perhaps it was not so terrible as it sounds," said Mr. Clarkson, soothingly.

"Sounds?" said the man, with rising fury. "Why, it's perfectly atrocious; it's almost inconceivable! Do you know there have been whole columns of complaints about these things in the *Times* for weeks past? We English people—we who come here for our holidays and bring money into the country—are we to be treated like dogs, losing our luggage for hours together, missing our trains, having our female relations stopped for whole nights in Paris! No matter; I shall write to the *Times* again the very moment I've had something to eat."

Mr. Clarkson expressed his approval of the intention, and had just recovered the two lines:—

In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!

when the train drew up at his station to a blare of bugles. It was the village band, reinforced by the military, who had come to welcome the heroic winners in a bob-sleigh competition against a neighbouring canton. Passing under a triumphal arch of ice, frozen upon a foundation of wire netting, the heroes were conducted to the Mairie, where

Mr. Clarkson, as he turned into one of the large hotels, heard the Mayor discoursing to them upon glory, and caught the words of enthusiastic promise: "Un concours monstre, colossal, de skis, de luges, de bobs sera créé!" He discovered afterwards that the Mayor was also President of the "Comité de Tourisme Hivernal," and that by his enterprising organisation of "Sports d'hiver," he had raised the number of visitors by nearly three thousand in a single winter.

Coming in just for the end of the *déjeuner*, Mr. Clarkson found long rows of English people at one table and long rows of "foreigners" at another. Nearly all were dressed in white woollen jerseys turned down at the throat, and all had white woollen caps which the men tucked into their pockets. To Mr. Clarkson they looked like Anatole France's Penguins soon after their conversion.

"I think, after all, this is the most beautiful valley in the Alps," said Mr. Clarkson, to break the ice with the female Penguin next him.

"Not such good tobogganing as in the Rhone valley," she said, drawing on a pair of white woollen gloves that reached up to the pinion joint.

"Don't feed you so well, either," said a male from the opposite side.

"I was thinking of the peculiar beauty of nature here," said Mr. Clarkson in self-defence.

"Oh, nature!" answered the man, less deferentially than Mr. Squeers when he said "She's a rum 'un, is Natur'! I should like to know how we should ever get on without her."

"Do you ski?" asked the girl, fearing that the conversation was becoming dangerous.

"You mean sliding over the snow with long planks on your feet?" Mr. Clarkson asked. "Well, no; I've never tried. But I see from the advertisements that on skis you have the high Alps at your mercy. I don't want to have the high Alps at my mercy, but how does one begin?"

"You must get a white jersey and a pair of skis first, and perhaps you will find the sloping field at the back enough to start upon, without the high Alps," said the girl, and they went out laughing, the man lighting his pipe as soon as he came in line with the foreigners' table.

Mr. Clarkson bought a white jersey, hired a pair of skis, and he did find the sloping field at the back quite enough to start upon. Hour after hour he shuffled and trampled up that slope, zigzagging painfully sideways with six feet of narrow board firmly strapped to each boot. If he attempted to walk straight up, the hideous things slipped backwards, and he fell forward on his face, straining his toes to breaking point against the straps, and only thankful that he escaped putting out his eyes upon the upturned points of the skis. Having struggled up about a quarter of the slope, he waddled slowly round, like a huge web-footed crane practising the fifth position in dancing, and looked back. From that height the slope appeared much steeper than from below. It appeared almost precipitous. But there was no helping that. The moment he got the skis fairly side by side pointing downhill, they began to move of themselves, and everywhere the skis went Mr. Clarkson was sure to go. They slid apart till his legs were like opened scissors. They clashed together; the

points interlocked, flinging him violently on his head and again straining his toes till they almost cracked. They glided over an atrocious hummock that always threw him on his back. They acquired a detestable impetus that bore him towards destruction against a cottage wall. He could not guide, he could not stop. His only safety was to fall, and he dared not do it. It was like leaping from an express to escape a collision. Happily, the skis themselves always brought him down long before the danger point, and with a sense of hairbreadth preservation, he found himself wallowing in the snow, only bruised and flayed, while, with these ridiculous planks kicking in the air and a spiked pole plunging about in his hands, he struggled to get up, as vainly as a cast sheep.

“Rather nice, isn’t it? Don’t you think it’s rather nice?” said the girl, skimming past him as he lay once, and bringing herself up with the Telemarkh turn. “And you’re getting on splendidly!”

“Thank you,” said Mr. Clarkson, pretending he was only resting. “Certainly, a natural exhilaration is induced by every form of escape.”

“Topping!” cried the man, as he rushed by and adroitly sat down sideways.

But Mr. Clarkson, thinking enough was done for honour, turned to what he supposed the more peaceful joys of the toboggan. Having planted his little “luge” or sleigh at the top of the straight run home, he tucked the string between his legs, clutched the sides, and hoped for pleasure. But he found himself gliding downwards at a still more deplorable pace than on skis, though he jammed both heels hard down upon the course. He swung from side

to side, he charged into the snowy barriers on either hand alternately. Splinters of ice, kicked up by his heels, flew into his face and blinded him. Covered with snow from head to foot, careless of time and space, he let the thing go its own way, and it went. Sprawling headforemost down the middle of the course, with blinded eyes, he just perceived it dribbling away to the finish, and then he crawled over the snowy barrier, barely in time to escape four men in a bob-sleigh who rushed past at a mile a minute, and took the final corner with bodies horizontal, parallel to the ground.

This experiment he tried twice more, while the mule was drawing the bob-sleigh up to the summit again, and each time he enjoyed that distinctly pleasurable sensation when at last the toboggan flung him off and he found himself still alive and almost unhurt.

“You’d see better if you lay on your stomach and went head first,” said a sympathetic observer.

“No doubt you are right,” Mr. Clarkson answered, “but there is a limit to absurdity.”

With some thankfulness he perceived that it was getting dark. The snow crunched with frost under his feet, and overhead the sky had turned to a deep blue, fading into green down the valley. In a cleft between the aiguilles one white star was already visible. But the highest peaks and domes of the mountains still glowed with the reddish brown and orange of sunset, though already there had fallen on them the silence of coming night. For a few moments still one aiguille flamed, and then all was cold.

“‘God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,’ ” Mr. Clarkson murmured regretfully, as he went to join the

others in the English tea-room where they always gathered to discuss their prowess and their health. "Yes, it still goes on—the mountain mystery, the gloom, the glory, the evening glow, and the awful rose of dawn; and still it may be said that Nature never did betray the heart that loved her."

And as he dressed for dinner he read on a printed notice in his bedroom that all visitors would be charged twopence a day for the embellishment of the valley, thus ensuring beauty and comfort of the first order.

"I feel rather like Flora in 'Little Dorrit,'" he thought. "Her engagement to Mr. Clennam—it was the morning of life it was bliss it was frenzy it was everything else of that sort in the highest degree.' And then her marriage with Mr. F.—'only necessary to mention asparagus and it appeared or to hint at any little delicate thing to drink and it came like magic in a pint bottle it was not ecstasy but it was comfort.' "

"Comfort?" he added, as he tried to sit down without pain and wriggle his toes into his dress shoes. "Well, I don't know about comfort!"

## XXI

### THE GRAND JURY

**W**HEN Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, received a summons to attend the Grand Jury, or to answer the contrary at his peril, he was glad. "For now," he thought, "I shall share in the duties of democracy and be brought face to face with the realities of life."

"Mrs. Wilson," he said to the landlady, as she brought in his breakfast, "what does this summons mean by describing the Court as being in the suburbs of the City of London? Is there a Brixton Branch?"

"O Lordy me!" cried the landlady, "I do hope, sir, as you've not got yourself mixed up with no such things; but the Court's nigh against St. Paul's, as I know from going there just before my poor nephew passed into retirement, as done him no good."

"The summons," Mr. Clarkson went on, "the summons says I'm to enquire, present, do, and execute all and singular things with which I may be then and there enjoined. Why should only the law talk like that?"

"Begging your pardon, sir," replied the landlady, "I sometimes do think it comes of their dressing so old-fashioned. But I'd ask it of you not to read me no more of

such like, if you'd be so obliging. For it do make me come over all of a tremble."

"I wonder if her terror arises from the hideousness of the legal style or from association of ideas?" thought Mr. Clarkson as he opened a *Milton*, of which he always read a few lines every morning to dignify the day.

On the appointed date, he set out eastward with an exhilarating sense of change, and thoroughly enjoyed the drive down Holborn among the crowd of City men. "It's rather strangely like going to the seaside," he remarked to the man next him on the motor-bus. The man asked him if he had come from New Zealand to see the decorations, and arrived late. "Oh, no," said Mr. Clarkson, "I seldom think the Colonies interesting, and I distrust decoration in every form."

It was unfortunate, but the moment he mounted the Court stairs, the decoration struck him. There were the expected scenes, historic and emblematic of Roman law, blindfold Justice, the Balance, the Sword, and other encouraging symbols. But in one semicircle he especially noticed a group of men, women, and children, dancing to the tabor's sound in naked freedom. "Please, could you tell me," he asked of a stationary policeman, "whether that scene symbolises the Age of Innocence, before Law was needed, or the Age of Anarchy, when Law will be needed no longer?"

"Couldn't rightly say," answered the policeman, looking up sideways; "but I do wish they'd cover them people over more decent. They're a houtrage on respectable witnesses."

"All art——" Mr. Clarkson was beginning, when the policeman said "Grand Jury?" and pushed him through

a door into a large court. A vision of middle age was there gathering, and a murmur of complaint filled the room—the hurried breakfast, the heat, the interrupted business, the reported large number of prisoners, likely to occupy two days, or even three.

Silence was called, and four or five elderly gentlemen in black-and-scarlet robes,—“wise in their wigs, and flamboyant as flamingoes,” as a daily paper said of the judges at the Coronation,—some also decorated with gilded chains and deep fur collars, in spite of the heat, entered from a side door and took their seats upon a raised platform. Each carried in his hand a nosegay of flowers, screwed up tight in a paper frill with lacework round the edges, like the bouquets that enthusiasts or the management throw to actresses.

“Are those flowers to cheer the prisoners?” Mr. Clarkson whispered, “or are they the rudimentary survivals of the incense that used to counteract the smell and infection of gaol-fever?”

“Covent Garden,” was the reply, and the list of jurors was called. The first twenty-three were sent into another room to select their foreman, and, though Mr. Clarkson had not the slightest desire to be chosen, he observed that the other jurors did not even look in his direction. Finally, a foreman was elected, no one knew for what reasons, and all went back to the Court to be “charged.” A gentleman in black and scarlet made an hour’s speech, reviewing the principal cases with as much solemnity as if the Grand Jury’s decisions would affect the Last Judgment, and Mr. Clarkson began to realise his responsibility so seriously that when the jurors were dismissed to their duties, he

took his seat before a folio of paper, a pink blotting-pad, and two clean quill pens, with a resolve to maintain the cause of justice, whatever might befall.

“Page eight, number twenty-one,” shouted the black-robed usher, who guided the jurors as a dog guides sheep, and wore the cheerful air of congenial labour successfully performed. Turning up the reference in the book of cases presented to each juror, Mr. Clarkson found: “Charles Jones, 35, clerk: forging and uttering, knowing the same to be forged, a receipt for money, to wit, a receipt for fees on a plaint note of the Fulham County Court, with intent to defraud.”

“This threatens to be a very abstruse case,” he remarked to a red-faced juror on his right.

“A half of bitter would elucidate it wonderful to my mind,” was the answer.

But already a policeman had been sworn, and given his evidence with the decisiveness of a gramophone.

“Any questions?” said the foreman, looking round the table. No one spoke.

“Signify, gentlemen, signify!” cried the genial usher, and all but Mr. Clarkson held up a hand.

“Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve,” counted the usher, totting up the hands till he reached a majority. “True Bill, True Bill! Next case. Page eleven, number fifty-two.”

“Do you mean to tell me that is all?” asked Mr. Clarkson, turning to his neighbour.

“Say no more, and I’ll make it a quart,” replied the red-faced man, ticking off the last case and turning up the new one, in which a doctor was already giving his evidence

against a woman charged with the wilful murder of her newly born male child.

“Signify, gentlemen, signify!” cried the usher. “Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. True Bill, True Bill! Next case. Page fourteen, number seventy-two.”

“Stop a moment,” stammered Mr. Clarkson, half rising; “if you please, stop one moment. I wish to ask if we are justified in rushing through questions of life and death in this manner. What do we know of this woman, for instance—her history, her distress, her state of mind?”

“Sit down!” cried some. “Oh, shut it!” cried others. All looked at him with the amused curiosity of people in a tramcar looking at a talkative child. The usher hustled across the room, and said in a loud and reassuring whisper: “All them things has got nothing to do with you, sir. Those is questions for the Judge and Petty Jury upstairs. The magistrates have sat on all these cases already and committed them for trial; so all you’ve got to do is to find a True Bill, and you can’t go wrong.”

“If we can’t go wrong, there’s no merit in going right,” protested Mr. Clarkson.

“Next case. Page fourteen, number seventy-two,” shouted the usher again, and as the witness was a Jew, his hat was sent for. “There’s a lot of history behind that hat,” said Mr. Clarkson, wishing to propitiate public opinion.

“Wish that was all there was behind it,” said the juror on his left. The Jew finished his evidence and went away. The foreman glanced round, and the usher had already got as far as “Signify,” when a venerable juror, prompted by Mr. Clarkson’s example, interposed.

"I should like to ask that witness one further question," he said in a fine Scottish accent, and after considerable shouting, the Jew was recalled.

"I should like to ask you, my man," said the venerable juror, "how you spell your name?" The name was spelt, the juror carefully inscribed it on a blank space opposite the charge, sighed with relief, and looked round. "Signify, gentlemen, signify!" cried the usher. "Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. True Bill, True Bill! Next case. Page six, number eleven."

Number eleven was a genuine murder case, and sensation pervaded the room when the murdered man's wife was brought in, weeping. She sobbed out the oath, and the foreman, wishing to be kind, said, encouragingly, "State briefly what you know of this case."

She sobbed out her story, and was led away. The foreman glanced round the tables.

"I think we ought to hear the doctor," said the red-faced man. The doctor was called and described a deep incised wound, severing certain anatomical details.

"I think we ought to hear the constable," said the red-faced man, and there was a murmur of agreement. A policeman came in, carrying a brown paper parcel. Having described the arrest, he unwrapped a long knife, which was handed round the tables for inspection. When it reached the red-faced juror, he regarded the blade closely up and down, with gloating satisfaction. "Are those stains blood?" he asked the policeman.

"Yes, sir; them there is the poor feller's blood."

The red-faced man looked again, and suddenly turning upon Mr. Clarkson, went through a pantomime of plung-

ing the knife into his throat. At Mr. Clarkson's horrified recoil he laughed himself purple.

"Well said the Preacher, you may know a man by his laughter," Mr. Clarkson murmured, while the red-faced man patted him amicably on the back.

"No offence, I hope; no offence!" he said. "Come and have some lunch. I always must, and I always do eat a substantial lunch. Nice, juicy cut from the joint, and a little dry sherry? What do you say?"

"Thank you very much indeed," said Mr. Clarkson, instantly benign. "You are most kind, but I always have coffee and a roll and butter."

"O my God!" exclaimed the red-faced man, and speaking across Mr. Clarkson to another substantial juror, he entered into discussion on the comparative merits of dry sherry and champagne-and-bitters.

Soon after two they both returned in the comfortable state of mind produced by the solution of doubt. But Mr. Clarkson's doubts had not been solved, and his state of mind was far from comfortable. All through the lunch hour he had been tortured by uncertainty. A plain duty confronted him, but how could he face it? He hated a scene. He abhorred publicity as he abhorred the glaring advertisements in the streets. He had never suffered so much since the hour before he had spoken at the Oxford Union on the question whether the sense for beauty can be imparted by instruction. He closed his eyes. He felt the sweat standing on his forehead. And still the cases went on. "Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. True Bill. True Bill. Two, four, six, eight . . ."

"Now then, sleepy!" cried the red-faced man in his ear,

giving him a genial dig with his elbow. Mr. Clarkson quivered at the touch, but he rose.

“Gentlemen,” he began, “I wish to protest against the continuation of this farce.”

The jury became suddenly alert, and his voice was drowned in chaos. “Order, order! Chair, chair!” they shouted. “Everybody’s doing it!” sang one.

“I call that gentleman to order,” said the foreman, rising with dignity. “He has previously interrupted and delayed our proceedings, without bringing fresh light to bear upon our investigations. After the luncheon interval, I was pleased to observe that for one cause or another—I repeat, for one cause or another—he was distinctly—shall I say somnolent, gentlemen? Yes, I will say somnolent. And I wish to inform him that the more somnolent he remains, the better we shall all be pleased.”

“Hear, hear! Quite true!” shouted the jury.

“Does it appear to you, sir, fitting to sit here wasting time?” Mr. Clarkson continued, with diminishing timidity. “Does it seem to you a proper task for twenty-three apparently rational beings——”

“Twenty-two! Twenty-two!” cried the red-faced man, adding up the jurors with the end of a pen, and ostentatiously omitting Mr. Clarkson.

The jurors shook with laughter. They wiped tears from their eyes. They rolled their heads on the pink blotting-paper in their joy. When quiet was restored, the foreman proceeded:

“I have already ruled that gentleman out of order, and I warn him that if he perseveres in his contumacious disregard of common decency and the chair, I shall proceed

to extremities as the law directs. We are here, gentlemen, to fulfil a public duty as honourable British citizens, and here we will remain until that duty is fulfilled, or we will know the reason why."

He glanced defiantly round, assuming an aspect worthy of the last stand at Maiwand. Looking at Mr. Clarkson as turkeys might look at a stray canary, the jurors expressed their applause.

But the genial usher took pity, and whispered across the table to him, "It'll all come right, sir; it'll all come right. You wait a bit. The Grand Jury always rejects one case before it's done; sometimes two."

And sure enough, next morning, while Mr. Clarkson was reading Burke's speeches which he had brought with him, one of the jurors objected to the evidence in the eighty-seventh case. "We cannot be too cautious, gentlemen," he said, "in arriving at a decision in these delicate matters. The apprehension of blackmail in relation to females hangs over every living man in this country."

"Delicate matters; blackmail; relation to females; great apprehension of blackmail in these delicate matters," murmured the jury, shaking their heads, and they threw out the Bill with the consciousness of an independent and righteous deed.

Soon after midday, the last of the cases was finished, and having signified a True Bill for nearly the hundredth time, the jurors were conducted into the Court where a prisoner was standing in the dock for his real trial. As though they had saved a tottering State, the Judge thanked them graciously for their services, and they were discharged.

“Just a drop of something to show there’s no ill-feeling?” said the red-faced man as they passed into the street.

“Thank you very much,” replied Mr. Clarkson warmly. “I assure you I have not the slightest ill-feeling of any kind. But I seldom drink.”

“Bless my soul!” said the red-faced man. “Then, what *do* you do?”

## XXII

### “THE DAILY ROUND, THE COMMON TASK”

**M**R. CLARKSON, of the Education Office, was enjoying his breakfast with his accustomed equanimity and leisure. Having skimmed the Literary Supplement of the *Times*, and recalled a phrase from a symphony on his piano, he began opening his letters. But at the third he paused in sudden perplexity, holding his coffee-cup half raised. After a while the brightness of adventurous decision came into his eyes, and he set the cup down, almost too violently, on the saucer.

“I’ll do it!” he cried, with the resolute air of an explorer contemplating the Antarctic. “The world is too much with me. I will recover my true personality in the wilderness. I will commune with my own heart and be still!”

He rang the bell hurriedly, lest his purpose should weaken.

“Oh, Mrs. Wilson,” he said carelessly, “I am going away for a few days.”

“Visiting at some gentleman’s seat to shoot the game-birds, I make no doubt,” answered the landlady.

“Why, no; not precisely that,” said Mr. Clarkson. “The fact is, Mr. Davies, a literary friend of mine—quite the best authority on Jacobean verse—offers me his house, just by way of a joke. The house will be empty, and he

says he only wants me to defend his notes on the 'History of the Masque' from burglary. I shall take him at his word."

"You alone in a house, sir? There's a thing!" exclaimed the landlady.

"A thing to be thankful for," Mr. Clarkson replied. "George Sand always longed to inhabit an empty house."

"Mr. Sand's neither here nor there," answered the landlady firmly. "But you're not fit, sir, begging your pardon. Unless a person comes in the morning to do for you."

"I shall prefer complete solitude," said Mr. Clarkson. "The calm of the uninterrupted morning has for me the greatest attraction."

"You'll excuse me mentioning such things," she continued, "but there's the washing-up and bed-making."

"Excellent athletic exercises!" cried Mr. Clarkson. "In Xenophon's charming picture of married life we see the model husband instructing the young wife to leave off painting and adorning herself, and to seek the true beauty of health and strength by housework and turning beds."

"There's many on us had ought to be beauties, then, without paint nor yet powder," said the landlady, turning away with a little sigh. And when Mr. Clarkson drove off that evening with his bag, she stood by the railings and said to the lady next door: "There goes my gentleman, and him no more fit to do for hisself than a babe unborn, and no more idea of cooking than a crocodile!"

The question of cooking did not occur to Mr. Clarkson till he had entered the semi-detached suburban residence with his friend's latchkey, groped about for the electric lights, and discovered there was nothing to eat in the

house, whereas he was accustomed to a biscuit or two and a little whisky and soda before going to bed.

"Never mind," he thought. "Enterprise implies sacrifice, and hunger will be a new experience. I can buy something for breakfast in the morning."

So he spent a placid hour in reading the titles of his friend's books, and then retired to the bedroom prepared for him.

He woke in the morning with a sense of profound tranquillity, and thought with admiration of the Dean of his College, whose one rule of life was never to allow anyone to call him. "This is worth a little subsequent trouble, if, indeed, trouble is involved," he murmured to himself, as he turned over and settled down to sleep again. But hardly had he dozed off when he was startled by an aggressive double-knock at the front door. He hoped it would not recur; but it did recur, and was accompanied by prolonged ringing of an electric bell. Feeling that his peace was broken, he put on his slippers and crept downstairs.

"What do you want?" he said at the door.

"Post," came a voice. Undoing the bolts, he put out a naked arm. "Even if you are the post," he remarked, "you need not sound the Last Trumpet!"

"Davies," said the postman, crammed a bundle of proofs into the expectant hand, and departed.

Mr. Clarkson turned into the kitchen. It presented a rather dreary aspect. The range and fire-irons looked as though they had been out all night. The grate was piled with ashes, like a crater.

"No wonder," said Mr. Clarkson, "that ashes are the popular comparison for a heart of extinguished affections.

Could anything be more desolate, more hopeless, or, I may say, more disagreeable? To how many a disappointed cook that simile must come home when first she gets down in the morning!"

He took the poker and began raking gently between the bars. But no matter how tenderly he raked, his hands appeared to grow black of themselves, and great clouds of dust floated about the room and covered him.

"This *must* be the way to do it," he said, pausing in perplexity; "I suppose a certain amount of dirt is inevitable when you are grappling with reality. But my pyjamas will be in a filthy state."

Taking them off, he hung them on the banisters, and, with a passing thought of Lady Godiva, closed the kitchen door and advanced again towards the grate, still grasping the poker in his hand. Then he set himself to grapple with reality in earnest. The ashes crashed together, dust rose in columns, iron rang on iron, as in war's smithy. But little by little the victory was achieved, and lines of paper, wood, and coal gave promise of brighter things. He wiped his sweating brow, tingeing it with a still deeper black, and, catching sight of himself in a servant's looking-glass over the mantelpiece, he said, "There is no doubt man was intended by nature to be a coloured race."

But while he was thinking what wisdom the Vestal Virgins showed in never letting their fire go out, another crash came at the door, followed by the war-whoop of a scalphunter. "I seem to recognise that noise," he thought, "but I can't possibly open the door in this condition."

Creeping down the passage, he said, "Who's there?" through the letter-box.

"Milko!" came the repeated yell.

"Would there be any objection to your depositing the milk upon the doorstep?" asked Mr. Clarkson.

"Righto!" came the answer, and steps retreated with a clang of pails.

"Why do the common people love to add 'o' to their words?" Mr. Clarkson reflected. "Is it that they unconsciously appreciate 'o' as the most beautiful of vowel sounds? But I wonder whether I ought to have blacked that range before I lighted the fire? The ironwork certainly looks rather pre-Dreadnought! What I require most now is a hot bath, and I'd soon have one if I only knew which of these little slides to pull out. But if I pulled out the wrong one, there might be an explosion, and then what would become of the 'History of the Masque?'"

So he put on a kettle, and waited uneasily for it to sing as a kettle should. "Now I'll shave," he said; "and when I am less like that too conscientious Othello, I'll go out and buy something for breakfast."

The bath was distinctly cool, but when he got out there was a satisfaction in the water's hue, and, though chilled to the bone, he carried his pyjamas upstairs with a feeling of something accomplished. On entering his bedroom, he was confronted by his disordered pillow, and a bed like a map of Switzerland in high relief. "Courage!" he cried, "I will make it at once. The secret of labour-saving is organisation."

So, with a certain asperity, he dragged off the clothes, and flung the mattress over, while the bedstead rolled about under the unaccustomed violence. "Rightly does the Scot talk about sorting a bed!" he thought, as he

wrenched the blankets asunder, and stood wondering whether the black border should be tucked in at the sides or the feet. At last he pulled the counterpane fairly smooth, but in an evil moment, looking under the bed, he perceived large quantities of fluffy and coagulated dust.

"I know what that is," he said. "That's called flue, and it must be removed. Swift advised the chambermaid, if she was in haste, to sweep the dust into a corner of the room, but leave her brush upon it, that it might not be seen, for that would disgrace her. Well, there is no one to see me, so I must do it as I can."

He crawled under the bed, and gathering the flue together in his two hands, began throwing it out of the window. "Pity it isn't nesting season for the birds," he said, as he watched it float away. But this process was too slow; so taking his towel, he dusted the drawers, the washing-stand, and the greater part of the floor, shaking the towel out of the window, until, in his eagerness, he dropped it into the back garden, and it lay extended upon the wash-house roof.

Tranquillity had now vanished, and solitude was losing some of its charm. It was quite time he started for the office, but he had not begun to dress, and, except for the kettle, which he could hear boiling over downstairs, there was not a gleam of breakfast. After washing again, he put on his clothes hurriedly, and determined to postpone the remainder of his physical exercise till his return in the evening.

Running downstairs, he saw his dirty boots staring him in the face. "Is there any peace in ever climbing up the climbing wave?" he quoted, with a sinking heart. There

was no help for it. The things had to be cleaned, or people would wonder where he had been. Searching in a cupboard full of oily rags, grimy leathers, and other filthy instruments, he found the blacking and the brushes, and presently the boots began to shine in patches here and there. Then he washed again, and as he flung open the front door, he kicked the milk all down the steps. It ran in a broad, white stream along the tiled pavement to the gate.

"There goes breakfast!" he thought, but the disaster reached further. Hastily fetching a pail of water, he soused it over the steps, with the result that all the whitening came off and mingled with the milk upon the tiles. A second pail only heightened the deplorable aspect, and he splashed large quantities of the water over his trousers and boots. He felt it running through his socks. It was impossible to go to the office like that, or to leave his friend's house in such a state.

He took off his coat and began pushing the milky water to and fro with a broom. Seeing the maid next door making great wet curves on her steps with a sort of stone, he called to her to ask how she did it.

"Same as other people, saucy," she retorted at once.

"Is that a bath-brick you are manipulating?" Mr. Clarkson asked.

"Bath-brick, indeed! What do you take me for?" she replied, and continued swirling the stuff round and round.

After a further search in the cupboard, Mr. Clarkson discovered a similar piece of stone, and stooping down, began to swirl it about in the same manner. The stuff was deposited in yellowish curves, which he believed would turn white. But it showed the marks so obviously that, to

break up the outlines, he carefully dabbed the steps all over with the flat of his hands. "The effect will be like an Academician's stippling," he thought, but when he had swept the surface of the garden path into the road, he scrutinised his handiwork with some satisfaction.

Hardly had he cleaned his boots again, washed again, and changed his socks, when there came another knocking at the door, polite and important this time. He found a well-dressed man, with tall hat, frock-coat, and umbrella, who inquired if he could speak to the proprietor.

"Mr. Davies is away," said Mr. Clarkson, fixing his eyes on the stranger's boots. "I beg your pardon, but may I remind you that you are standing on my steps? I'm afraid you will whiten the soles of your boots, I mean."

"Thank you, that's of no consequence," said the stranger, entering, and leaving two great brown footprints on the step and several white ones on the passage. "But I thought I might venture to submit to your consideration a pound of our unsurpassable tea."

"Tea?" cried Mr. Clarkson, with joyous eagerness. "I suppose you don't happen to have milk, sugar, bread and butter, and an egg or two concealed about your person, do you?"

"I am not a conjuror," said the stranger, resuming his hat with some hauteur.

An hour later, Mr. Clarkson was enjoying at his club a meal that he endeavoured to regard as lunch, and on reaching the office in the afternoon he apologised for having been unavoidably detained at home.

"There's no place like home," replied his elderly colleague, with his usual inanity.

“Perhaps fortunately, there is not,” said Mr. Clarkson, and attempting to straighten his aching back and ease his suffering limbs, he added, “I am coming to the conclusion that woman’s place is the home.”

## XXIII

### THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

MR. CLARKSON, of the Education Office, was coming back from a Garden Suburb, where the conversation had turned upon Eugenics. Photographs of the most beautiful Greek statues had stood displayed along the overmantel; Walter Pater's praise of the Parthenon frieze had been read; and a discussion had arisen upon the comparative merits of masculine and feminine beauty, during which Mr. Clarkson maintained a modest silence. He did, however, support the contention of his hostess that the human form was the most beautiful of created things, and he shared her regret that it is so seldom seen in London to full advantage. He also agreed with the general conclusion that, in the continuance of the race, quality was the first thing to be considered, and that the chief aim of civilisation should be to restore Hellenic beauty by selecting parentage for the future generation.

Meditating over the course of the discussion, and regretting, as he always did, that he had not played a distinguished part in it, Mr. Clarkson became conscious of a certain dissatisfaction. "Should not one question," he asked himself, "the possibility of creating beauty by pre-concerted design? Conscious and deliberate endeavours to manipulate the course of Nature often frustrate their own purpose, and the action of cultivated intelligence

might conduce to a delicate peculiarity rather than a beauty widely diffused. Such a sense for form as pervaded Greece must spring, unconscious as a flower, from a passion for the beautiful implanted in the heart of the populace themselves."

His motor-bus was passing through a region unknown to him—one of those regions where raw vegetables and meat, varied with crockery and old books, exuberate into booths and stalls along the pavement, and salesmen shout to the heedless passer-by prophetic warnings of opportunities eternally lost. Contemplating the scene with a sensitive loathing against which his better nature struggled in vain, Mr. Clarkson had his gaze suddenly arrested by a flaunting placard which announced:—

TO-NIGHT AT 10.30!  
UNEXAMPLED ATTRACTION!!  
OUR BEAUTY SHOW!!!  
UNEQUALLED IN THE WORLD!  
PRIZES OF UNPRECEDENTED VALUE!!  
ENCOURAGE HOME LOVELINESS!!!

"The very thing!" thought Mr. Clarkson, rapidly descending from his seat. "Sometimes one is almost compelled to believe in a Divinity that shapes our criticism of life."

"Shillin'," said the box-office man, when Mr. Clarkson asked for a stall. "Evenin' dress hoptional." And Mr. Clarkson entered the vast theatre.

It was crammed throughout. Every seat was taken, and excited crowds of straw-hatted youths, elderly men, and

sweltering women stood thick at the back of the pit and down the sides of the stalls. " 'Not here, O Apollo,' " quoted Mr. Clarkson sadly, as he squeezed on to the end of a seat beside a big man who had spread himself over two. "But still, even in the lower middle, beauty may have its place."

"Warm," said the big man conversationally.

"Unavoidably, with so fine an audience," replied Mr. Clarkson, with his grateful smile for any sign of friendliness.

"Like it warm?" asked the big man, turning upon Mr. Clarkson, as though he had said he preferred babies scolloped.

"Well, I rather enjoy the sense of common humanity," said Mr. Clarkson, apologising.

"Enjoy common humanity?" said the big man, mopping his head. "Can't say I do. 'Cos why, I was born perticler."

For a moment Mr. Clarkson was tempted to claim a certain fastidiousness himself. But he refrained, and only remarked, "What *is* a Beauty Show?"

The big man turned slowly to contemplate him again, and then, slowly turning back, regarded his empty pipe with sad attention.

"'Ear that, Albert?" he whispered at last, leaning over to a smart little fellow in front, who was dressed in a sportsmanlike manner, and displayed a large brass horseshoe and hunting crop stuck sideways in his tie.

"The ignorance of the upper classes is somethink shockin'," the sportsman replied, imitating Mr. Clarkson's Oxford accent. Then turning back half an eye upon Mr. Clarkson, like a horse that watches its rider, he added,

"You wait and see, old cock, same as the Honourable Asquith."

"Isn't the retort a trifle middle-aged?" suggested Mr. Clarkson, with friendly cheerfulness.

"Who's that he's callin' middle-aged?" cried a girl facing round sharply, and removing the sportsman's arm from her waist.

"I only meant," pleaded Mr. Clarkson, "that an obsolescent jest is, like middle age, occasionally vapid, possessing neither the interest of antiquity nor the freshness of surprise."

"Very well, then," said the girl, flouncing back and seeking Albert's arm again; "you just keep your tongue to yourself, same as me mine, or *I'll* surprise you!"

At that moment the rising curtain revealed a cinematograph scene, representing a bulldog which stole a mutton chop, was at once pursued by a policeman and the village population, rushed down streets and round corners, leapt through a lawyer's office, ran up the side of a house, followed by all his pursuers, and was finally discovered in a child's cot, where the child, with one arm round his neck, was endeavouring to make him say grace before meat. The audience was profoundly moved. Cries of "Bless his 'eart!" and "Good old Ogden!" rang through the house.

"Great!" said the big man.

"It illustrates," replied Mr. Clarkson, "the popular sympathy with the fugitive, combined with the public's love of vicarious piety."

"Fine dog," said the sportsmanly Albert.

"It was a clever touch," Mr. Clarkson agreed, "to introduce so hideous a creature immediately before a Beauty

Show. The strange thing is that the dog's ugliness only enhanced the sympathetic affection of the audience. Yet beauty leads us by a single hair."

"You wait before you start talkin' about beauty or hair either!" said Albert.

The curtain then rose upon a long green-baize table placed at the back of the stage. Behind it were sitting eleven respectable and portly gentlemen in black coats. One in the centre, venerable for gold eyeglasses and grey side-whiskers, acted as chairman.

"Are those the beauties?" asked Mr. Clarkson ironically, recalling the Garden Suburb discussion as to the superiority of the masculine form.

"'Ear that, Albert?" said the big man again. "Judges," he added, in solemn pity.

"On what qualification are they selected as critics?" Mr. Clarkson asked.

"Give prizes," said the big man.

"That qualifies them for Members of Parliament rather than judges of beauty," said Mr. Clarkson, but he was shown that on the table before each judge stood a case of plated articles, a vase, a candlestick, or something, which he had contributed as a prize.

An authoritative person in a brown suit and a heavy watch-chain festooned across his waistcoat came forward and was greeted with applause, varied by shouts of "Bluebeard!" "Crippen!" and "Father Mormon!" In the brief gasps of silence he explained the rules of the competition, remarking that the entries were already unusually numerous, the standard of beauty exceptionally high, and accordingly he called upon the audience by their applause

or the reverse to give the judges every assistance in allotting as desirable a set of prizes as he had ever handled.

“The first prize,” he went on, “is a silver-plated coffee-set, presented by our ardent and lifelong supporter, Mr. Joseph Croke, proprietor of the celebrated grocery store, who now occupies the chair. The second prize is presented by our eminent butcher, Mr. James Collins, who considers his own stock unsuitable for the occasion, and has therefore substituted a turquoise necklace, equivalent in value to a prime sirloin. For third prize Mr. Watkins, the conspicuous hairdresser of the High Street, offers a full-sized plait of hair of the same colour as worn by the lady.”

“Thoughtful!” observed the big man approvingly.

“He could hardly give black hair to a yellow-haired woman,” Mr. Clarkson replied.

“I said thoughtful,” the big man repeated; “always thoughtful is Watkins, more especial towards females.”

“Besides these superb rewards,” the showman continued, “the rest of the judges present sixteen consolation prizes, and Mr. Crawley, the eminently respected provision-merchant round the corner, invites all competitors to supper at twelve o’clock to-night, without distinction of personal appearance.”

“Jolly good blow-out!” said Albert’s girl, with satisfaction.

“Rather a gross reward for beauty,” Mr. Clarkson observed.

“And why shouldn’t nice-lookin’ people have a good blow-out, same as you?” enquired the girl, with a flash of indignation. “They deserves it more, I ’ope!”

“I entirely agree,” said Mr. Clarkson; “my remark was Victorian.”

A babel of yells, screams, and howlings greeted the appearance of the two first candidates. The Master of the Ceremonies led them forward, by the right and left hand. Pointing at one, he shouted her name, and a wild outburst of mingled applause and derision rent the air. Shouting again, he pointed at the other, and exactly the same turmoil of noise arose. Then he faced the girls round to the judges, and they instantly became conscious of the backs of their dresses, and put their hands up to feel if their blouses were hooked.

But the chairman, with responsible solemnity, having contemplated the girls through his eyeglasses, holding his head slightly on one side, briefly consulted the other judges, and signalled one girl to pass behind the table on his right, the other on his left. The one on his left was recognised as winner, and the house applauded with tumult, the supporters of the defeated yielding to success.

Before the applause had died, two more girls were led forward, and the storm of shouts and yells arose again. One of the candidates was dressed in pink, with a shiny black belt round her waist, a huge pink bow in her fluffy, light hair, and white stockings very visible. When the Master shouted her name, she cocked her head on one side, giggled, and writhed her shoulders. Cries of "Saucy!" "Mabel!" "Ain't I a nice little girl?" and "There's a little bit of all right!" saluted her, and the approval was beyond question. He pointed to the other, and a rage of execration burst forth, "O Ginger!" "Ain't she got a cheek?" "Lock her up for the night!" "Oh, you giddy old thing!" were the chief cries that Mr. Clarkson could distinguish in the general howling. A band of youths behind him began sing-

ing, "Tell me the old, old story." In the gallery they sang "Sit down, sit down," to the tune of the Westminster chimes. Half the theatre joined in one song, half in the other, and the singing ended in catcalls, whistles, and shrieks of mockery. The red-haired girl stood pale and motionless, her eyes fixed on some point of vacancy beyond the yelling crowd.

"Terribly painful position for a woman!" said Mr. Clarkson.

"Ill-advised," said the big man, shaking his head; "very ill-advised."

"Good lesson for her," remarked Albert. "These shows teach the ugly ones to know their place. Improve the breed these shows do—same as 'orse-racing." And having shouted "Ginger!" again, he added, "Bandy!"

"Ain't it wicked for a woman to have such an imperence?" cried Albert's girl, joining in the yell as the candidate was marched off to the side of the losers.

"Isn't this all a little personal?" Mr. Clarkson protested; "a trifle—what should I say?—Oriental, perhaps?"

"She don't know how hidjus she is," the big man explained. "No female don't."

"Nor no man neither, I should 'ope!" said Albert's girl, and wriggling out of the encircling arm, she suddenly sprang up, put her hat straight, and forced her way towards the stage.

"Now the fat's on!" observed the big man, with a foreboding sigh.

"You may pull her 'ead off," Albert answered resignedly. "There ain't no 'oldin' of her."

"Dangerous, very dangerous!" whispered the big man to Mr. Clarkson. "A terror is Albert when she's beat! Bloodshed frequent outside! She's always beat—always starts, and always beat."

"Celtic, I suppose," Mr. Clarkson observed.

"Dangerous, very dangerous!" repeated the big man with a sigh.

And so, indeed, it proved. Pair after pair were led forward, and when the turn of Albert's girl came, she won the heat easily. Then the process of selection among the forty or fifty of the first set of winners began, and she won the second heat. At last the competitors were reduced to six, and she stood on the right, in line with the others, while the showman pointed to each in turn, and called for the judgment of the audience. Then, indeed, passion rose to hurricane. Tumultuous storms of admiration and fury received each girl. Again and again each was presented, and the same seething chaos of sound ensued. The whole theatre stood howling together, waving hats and handkerchiefs, blowing horns and whistles, carried beyond all limits of reason by the rage for the beautiful.

Albert gathered his friends round him, conducted them like an orchestra, and made them yell, "The one on the right! The one on the right! We want the one on the right, or we'll never go home to-night!"

"Shout!" he screamed to Mr. Clarkson, who was contemplating the scene with his habitual interest.

"Certainly I will, though the lady is not a Dreadnought," Mr. Clarkson replied soothingly, and he began saying, "Brava! Brava!" quite loud. Instantly, Albert's opponents caught up the word, and echoed it in mockery,

imitating his correct pronunciation. Mincing syllables of "Brava! Brava!" were heard on every side.

"You just let me catch you booin' my girl!" shouted Albert, springing in frenzy upon the seat, and shaking his fist close to Mr. Clarkson's eyes. "You let me catch you! Ever since you came in, you've been layin' odds against my girl, you and your rotten talk!"

"On the contrary," replied Mr. Clarkson, smiling, "even apart from æsthetic grounds, I should be delighted to see her victorious."

"Then put up your dukes or take that on your silly jaw," cried Albert, preparing to strike.

"The beautiful is always hard," Mr. Clarkson observed, still smiling.

"Best come away with me, mister," said the big man, pushing between them. "Avoid unpleasantness."

"Race as good as over," he added, as he forced Mr. Clarkson down the gangway. "Places: pink first, 'cos she puts her 'ead a' one side; factory girl second, 'cos they likes her bein' dressed common; blue third, 'cos of her openwork stockin's; Albert's girl nowhere, 'cos she never is."

They mounted one of the cars that are fed on the County Council's lightning.

"Certainly a remarkable phase," Mr. Clarkson observed, "although I concluded that, in regard to beauty, the voice of the people is not necessarily identical with the voice of God."

"Coachman!" said the big man, calling down to the driver, and imitating the voice of a duchess. "Coachman! drive slowly twice round the Park, and then 'ome."

## XXIV

### THE SUBMERGED

**I**T had been a perfect autumn day and as Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, left his club, the air was still balmy and full of the bland, melancholy smell of fading leaves. He was expected to dinner at a friend's house, but thought he would stroll across one of the parks to a Tube station. For the risen moon was only just past the full, and he liked to recall the many beautiful things which the poets have sung about her.

Gazing at the moon's rosy and bulbous face, he began with, "Art thou pale for weariness of climbing heaven," but had got no further when the beat and scuffle of rapid footsteps distracted his thoughts. Under the rows of plane trees—the plane was Mr. Clarkson's favourite tree, owing to its classical associations and its breadth of light and shadow—along the shaded paths and across the open grass itself, people were certainly beginning to hasten. Even the lovers upon the benches and on the embowered seats, for which they had paid a penny (one seat for two), there to be "imparadised in one another's arms"—even the lovers, entwined like Rodin's statues, broke their inexpressive embraces, and hurried away. An ominous sound fell on Mr. Clarkson's ear. Again and yet again it fell. He paused to listen, and as he paused he quoted, almost unconsciously:—

And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before,  
Arm! Arm! It is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

He looked around him. The revelry by night had flown. Dark shadows were just visible, flitting into obscurity, like autumn leaves or the generations of mankind. He stood in sylvan solitude, illuminated by the uncertain moon, and there could be no doubt about it, the cannon's roar was getting nearer and clearer. Suddenly there came an enormous crash. It far surpassed the sound of the friendly guns. Another came, and yet another still. The air quivered, the trees shook. Much as Mr. Clarkson admired the plane, and beautiful as he considered its breadth of shade, he knew in his heart that it was a poor protection against high explosive. As though to confirm his apprehensions, there reached him a noise of something falling, falling through the leaves. "That is not the chestnut pattering to the ground!" Mr. Clarkson had hardly traced the quotation in his mind when, with a hiss and a ghastly shriek, something still more terrible hacked its way through the branches and fell with a thud upon the turf beside the path. Jamming on his soft-felt hat for cover, Mr. Clarkson ran.

As he ran, he remembered the Bishop of London's "Thoughts during an Air Raid," which, in an interval of official leisure, he had read in the *Times* that morning. "This is our bit of danger," the Bishop had said. "Let us recognise it and be proud of it." But Mr. Clarkson felt no pride. "If we do happen to be among those who are killed," the Bishop had continued, "we die for our country and the freedom of the world as really as our brothers die in the trenches, and are upon the Roll of Honour of our country."

Mr. Clarkson loved his country. He had always been ready to fight for freedom, though, unhappily for freedom, he was just over military age. But he felt no inclination to be placed upon the Roll of Honour for being killed in the middle of a London park by fragments of his country's shells. He wished the Bishop had prayed for rain instead.

Though never distinguished for athletic accomplishments, Mr. Clarkson reached the Tube station at considerable speed. "If I had run like that, I might perhaps have won the Consolation Race at school," he thought to himself as he edged into the crowd surging around the entrance. The booking office was shut down; the lifts were not working. "Pass away! Pass away!" cried the official policeman in mere habit, recalling to Mr. Clarkson again the rapid passing of man's generations. "If you want to take cover in our funk-hole," said the Special, "you must proceed down the stairs." Down the stairs Mr. Clarkson proceeded, not seeking cover, as he told himself, but because this was the natural way to his friend's house. He would have gone this way even in the well-remembered days of peace. But how lamentable was now the change! A narrow gangway was left clear in the middle of the winding stairs, but on each side of every step, human forms were seated, their feet against the backs of the human forms upon the step below. Treading cautiously, so as not to trample on little outstretched hands and arms, Mr. Clarkson descended the staircase, round and round, and deeper yet, until the platforms were reached.

Then, indeed, he beheld crowded humanity as he had not witnessed it since his only visit to the Derby. Every foot of the pavement was occupied by something living.

Nearest the lines, people were standing up and slowly moving about, or pushing and struggling in search of relations. "The poor always have relations," Mr. Clarkson reflected. But along the back, and huddled against the wall, men, women, and children lay together. Bare legs and arms by the score projected from the confused lines of skirts and other clothes, as the heads and tails of fishes project from a laden net. Sometimes the tangled limbs were flung carelessly out, unconscious and relaxed, so deeply was the child involved in sleep. Sometimes they twitched restlessly against the cold stone, or a child waved them in the air for fun. Like hens in the midst of their broods, women sat against the wall uttering shrill cries to keep their young together. Some suckled babies in the hope of peace. Others, big with child, lay on the pavement. With legs stuck out straight in front of them, men leaned back and smoked, contemplating the painted advertisements which allured with feminine charms or the delights of the seaside. Some parties had brought rugs or blankets with them. Most had provisions in bottles and newspaper packets. Over all, like a semi-opaque fog, hung the unmistakable smell of mankind and poverty.

Mr. Clarkson felt like Faust when he entered the prison, all the wretchedness of man clutching at his heart. "Der Menschheit ganzer Jammer fasst mich an," he thought, but he kept the deadly language to himself. In the hope of approaching nearer to dinner by the next train, he picked his way step by step over dogs and food, and bundles and infant limbs, towards the further end of the platform, where the crowd seemed looser. Up against the high wooden palings which guarded the entrance of the

tunnel, he found two large families settled down as though for games of Hunt-the-slipper. But games were far from the thoughts of either. In the centre of one group sat a Jewess, her face the monument of national persistence. Round her lay the children of Israel, bright-eyed, long-nosed, curly-haired, looking furtively at the foe. For the central figure of the other brood was far from pleased, and she was vast, exuberant, a queen of scorn in the vernacular tongue. A brood swarmed about her skirts, and clung to her bosom.

“Why don’t them as is supposed to do their duty by us hang all furriners? That’s what I want to know,” she was saying.

Pretending not to understand the observation, the Jewess continued to comb a child’s hair, with critical exactness.

Appealing to a large and somnolent form which leant against the paling beside the Jewish group, the native woman repeated her question in still more defiant tones.

“Now, you look here, Mrs. Grimsby,” the form replied, “we’ve jolly well had enough of this! Why can’t you be quiet and enjy yerself, same as other people?”

“ ‘Cos I ain’t a-goin’ to enjy myself, not while there’s a furriner in this country unhung!” came the retort. “Ain’t it furriners as our men’s fightin’? Tell me that, you moulderin’ flagstaff!”

“Now, Mrs. Grimsby, none of yer foul language here, *if* you please,” said the man. “I been a soldier in my time, and I knows what’s what without bein’ called no flagstaff nor other names. Look ’ere, gov’nor,” he added, seeing Mr. Clarkson, “these two females are havin’ a bit of altication,

as you might say, and maybe you'd put 'em on the right way of thinkin'."

"All I say," cried Mrs. Grimsby, shaking one of her babies at the Jewish circle; "all I say is as me and my family has occupied that corner alongside the palin' for gettin' on for a week past, us takin' cover through my 'usband fightin' them furriners over there, and him not wishin' to come 'ome and find it full of corpses, same as Mrs. Crisper's was, and us comin' down long afore dark this very day, and findin' a pack of Sheenies littered down on our very own doss as we'd always stuck to. And all I say is as all furriners ought to be hung, same as the papers tells us, and that's the long and short."

"We was here first," said the Jewess, and said no more.

"Well, my good woman," Mr. Clarkson began, soothingly.

"Don't you get good-womaning me!" shouted Mrs. Grimsby.

"Well," Mr. Clarkson started afresh, "of course, one is sorry you are excluded from your accustomed position; but still you have no prescriptive right to one corner more than any other place."

"Lord lumme," cried the symbol of Charity, in scorn; "did you hear that, Mr. Flagstaff? I reckon the toff's a Sheeny or pro-German, or somethink of that!"

"No language, Mrs. Grimsby, I ask it of you," said the man; "no language is allowed in my quarters! All this gentleman means to say is as you've got to come down earlier if you wants to keep a place."

"And how's a woman to come down earlier as has got seven children to look to, washin' and dressin' and mendin'

and puttin' to school and givin' their dinners to and makin' ready for their teas and goin' for the separation money and fetchin' the Gov'ment beer, as ain't no good for a woman with a baby neither, and runnin' back and forwards to the Tube mornin', noon, and night with all the lot of 'em and them gettin' no sleep nor me neither?" Mrs. Grimsby paused, exhausted by the catalogue of her woes.

Then with careful deliberation and eyes fixed upon her neighbours, she uttered the words, "And all I say is as all furriners and aliens, as they calls theirselves, had ought to be thrown to the bears."

"We was here first," repeated the Jewess, and said no more.

To relieve her overwrought nerves, Mrs. Grimsby slapped all the children within her reach, and made them howl.

"Don't you get doin' that, mother," the man urged, persuasively; "I want this gentleman to hear a question as I'm goin' to ask of him, and the question is: 'Are we down'earted?'"

"It is a question expectin' the answer 'No,'" said Mr. Clarkson, smiling at memories of the Latin Grammar.

"And that's the answer as it shall always get!" cried the man, waving his arm; "Kayser or no Kayser, Belgians or no Belgians, Russians or Prussians, Australians or Australians, right 'Uns or wrong 'Uns, there's only but one answer as it'll always get, and that's the answer 'No!'"

It was a moment of patriotic fervour, and drawing a black bottle from an inconceivable pocket, Mr. Flagstaff handed it round. "It'll keep our tempers cool; keep us from gettin' the wind up," he said, and Mrs. Grimsby,

feeling soothed, answered in apology, "I never said noth-ink only for wishin' all furriners was thrown to the bears."

"Sit down, gov'nor," said the man to Mr. Clarkson, "or yer might get knocked across them rails, and we don't want no elexecution 'ere! Or p'raps you'd like to share holdin' a kid or two with me?"

Mr. Clarkson longed for falling shrapnel on an open field. But still he sat down, and a child of four at once cuddled up beside him and fell asleep.

"Medea," he thought to himself, "said she would miss the smell of children. Queer tastes mothers have!"

"There's a lack of humour about the whole proceedings," said Mr. Flagstaff, taking a longer pull at his bottle, "but man wants but little 'ere below. Now we'll 'ave a little singing. You come in with the chorus, gov'nor."

When it came to the chorus, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, all together!" he cried. " 'Take me 'ome to dear ole Blighty!'"

" 'Take me 'ome to dear ole Blighty!'" All the voices joined in the song. Even Mr. Clarkson sang. He was still singing when he crushed into a belated and overburdened train. With the popular tune in his head he climbed the spiral stairs like one escaping from the Inferno into Purgatory at the end of his journey.

## “THE COAST”

HERE is an attraction in the very worst, a beauty in the Valley of Tophet. You may more easily find a life devoted to lepers than to the wholesome, and one who has lived on the West Coast has always a yearning to return. Nature has there said, “Look, I will display all my powers of evil. I will do the worst I can. I will give querulous mankind something to whine about. I will silence the silliness that prattles of a beautiful world.” Then she took stinking slime and for hundreds of miles she laid down the mangrove swamps that never dry, and covered them with deadly growths that rot under their own darkness. The sea that washes the grey roots with its tides she filled with sharks, and in unmeasured miles of ooze she crowded mud-fish that run like lizards, and colourless crabs, and long worms with innumerable feet, and pale slugs, and crocodiles with eyes like stones. Where the slime at last ended, and a man might stand without sinking to the waist, she set a forest impenetrable to the sun and air, and bound the trunks together into a solid tangle of spikes and thorns and suckers.

In this forest she put deadly serpents and envenomed spiders, obscene reptiles, and scorpions as large as a woman’s foot. Then, over swamp and forest alike, she blew dense clouds of flies and every kind of poisonous

insect—the fever gnat, the gnat that gives blackwater, compared to which fever counts as health, the speck of life that makes a man swell like a bulbous tree, and the speck that sends him to the grave by a few months' sleep through madness. Savage ants also to tear his flesh as with red-hot pincers she poured upon the land in countless hordes, and ticks to suck his blood, and craw-craw to drive him frantic, and, in the sandy places, many millions of jiggers to burrow into his toes and rot them away.

Having thus prepared a place for man's habitation, she brought the sun to blaze sheer down upon it for half the year, and for the other half she soused it in perpetual and violent rain. All the year round she kept it moist, whelmed in a hot mist that could be felt, and stank of rottenness a hundred miles to sea. She lashed it with tempests as with a whip, and with tornadoes she licked up the giant trees as a cow licks grass. With the sword of lightning she pierced the very blanket of the swamp, that she might strike the cowering brood of man, and if for a while the leaves of the forest dried, she burnt the land with fire, consuming in its destruction the little huts that men and women had woven to shelter themselves and their young.

There, no prospect pleases, and man is far viler than in Ceylon's balmy isle. What perversity, then, filled me with longing as I read a book, called "*The Palm-Oil Ruffian*," by Anthony Hamilton? As a novel it had no particular merit. It showed no insight into character, and its one "stirring event" was just the least interesting part. It was simply an account of a trader's life on the Coast, and the trader's only distinction is that he went in for rubber instead of palm oil, like most of the traders I have known.

But the account was so exact and intimate that as I read I longed to be lying out once more in the shade of a "factory" on a "beach." I longed for the taste of foo-foo, sap-sap, or paw-paw, with just a squeeze of lime, and for the rich smell of "palm-oil chop." The river, pouring its huge stream between black islands of swamps, flows past like oil itself. From far away comes the boom of a gun, warning the distant creeks that an Elder-Dempster boat has arrived with letters and papers from home, only three weeks old. The boys have just stopped rolling the casks of oil and bags of kernels, and over all hangs the peculiar sweetish fragrance of the palm. Black forms pad silently about or lie stretched in sleep. "Hey, James," someone calls, "you lib for bring dat chop?" "Hey, massa," answers a voice from an outside kitchen; "I lib for bring one time."

Or else I longed to see the low red cliff of Accra looming up from the misty sea, and to hear the splash of the twenty paddles and the loud hiss of the natives to keep the time, as, standing up side by side, with faces to the bow, they drive the great surf-boat to the gangway steps, and the official in the stern tells us who is dead since last we heard. And I longed to feel the boat rise and fall through the surf again, to see the world vanish and reappear as the great waves roll us in, to know again the crash of the bows upon the shore and hear the roar of the water rushing back and trying to suck us with it; to feel the "branch boat" go bumping over Lagos bar among the tormented foam; to dine with the officers on "the Hill" at Calabar; to be carried up in a hammock because the little walk would drench my clothes with sweat; to find a mess where canvas shirts

and collars are regulation; to go down again among the "palm-oil ruffians" of the bank and see them talking or gambling in "singlets" and white trousers, while from darkened rooms and corners almost invisible figures crouching in blue cotton cloths watch them with spaniel eyes; to land once more upon a lonely "beach" between poisonous swamp and steaming sea, where a solitary white man spends his life rejoicing to have escaped from the gaieties of his native France to a land where "there are no Commandments—no, not one." Hey, I fit go catch we country one time! Hey, dat is fine too much!

It is curious. In all the world there can hardly be a life more unwholesome, more enervating and monotonous, and one would almost say more degrading than the life of an "agent" on "the Rivers." In a few months his face begins to look pale and streaky from impoverished blood; hardly a week passes without fever of some sort; before he gets away for his first leave home his memory has probably begun to shake and his conversation is uncertain. Day and night he sweats continually. If he lies naked on the bare floor the boards are wet to his shape when he gets up. Thirst never leaves him for more than half an hour. Probably he has no equal society but a distant agent or two far away up the creeks. He has no companion but the negro girl whom he has hired from her mother or her chief for £5 and a "dash," and who bears him yellow-wooled, grey-eyed negroids for the missionaries to struggle with in their schools. The labour with the oil and kernel is almost ceaseless. Sometimes he looks after a store as well. Isolation, the absence of a standard, and the depression of fever begin slowly to eat away his nature. Ten to one, after a

year or so, he does things he would not have done before. Probably he shoots birds sitting, just for the sake of slaughter. (It is noticeable that Mr. Anthony Hamilton introduces an instance of this tendency, which I have often observed myself.) Very likely he begins to kick or flog his natives. Often he finds his only mental interest in extreme sensuality. I have known a trader on the Rivers who solaced his leisure only by books which made the worst of modern novels seem fit for Sunday School prizes. Yet to this life nearly all who have known it will long to return, at the risk of their health, their brains, and their immortal souls.

Mahogany, gold, a little cotton, less rubber, and one or two other things come in, but in the main it is a matter of soap and candles. It is for the palm oil that we hold the Coast and the Rivers, and count mangrove swamps among the assets of our Empire. For soap and candles we send traders to their peculiar doom, and District Commissioners to look down upon the traders, and officers to look down upon the District Commissioners. For soap and candles we take the natives in hand and instruct the inscrutable children of the forest in the useless knowledge of our Board Schools. For this we induce the Kroo boys of Liberia to migrate to and fro with the variegated boxes they love, and encourage the native women to put to sea with a luggage more useful than polite. For this we send out a punitive expedition when the weather cools, and propagate true religion by smashing up a juju. Soap and candles cost something besides the pence. Are they worth the extra dash? Who fit to savvy? Dat no good for we palaver. I tink more better we go for catch dilly sleep one time.

## XXVI

### THE EXUBERANT RACE

**C**ONSIDER three scenes:—

(1) In Central Africa, upon the low watershed which pours down the tributaries of the Congo on one side, and of the Zambesi on the other, the full moon is moving over long ridges of black forest. In an open clearing outside a stockaded village of huts, black figures are dancing by her light. They dance in a broken circle. Now and again, one of them leaps out into the centre and dances alone, prancing with his legs, swinging his arms up and down, and especially delighting in wriggling his backbone like a snake. The more he wriggles, the louder do the other dancers clap their hands. Sometimes the circle suddenly breaks up, and, ranged in opposite lines, the men and women advance towards each other and then retire, clapping their hands, prancing, and wriggling their backbones to the utmost of their power. Sometimes they burst into song, chanting the praise of physical delights and domestic joys. “I am going to my mother in the village, in the village,” is a favourite chant, usually set to a frog-dance in which all squat and leap. Sometimes the song is accompanied by the twanging of the ochisanji, an instrument of iron slats fastened to a wooden sounding-board. And all the time, no matter what the dance may be, the

great African drum, the ochingufu, throbs and booms without cessation, sounding far through the forest, and striking terror into all the spirits of evil which swarm throughout the world. So the dance rages through the night, excitement reaching frenzy and then slowly subsiding till, as in an English dance, "a silence falls with the waking bird, and a hush with the setting moon."

(2) A few hundred miles away two American doctors have pitched a little camp of huts like a native village. The fame of their healing miracles has spread far, and another little village of huts has gathered round them. From distant forests men and women have brought their sick—people with leprosy, people with putrefying sores, babies who seem to waste away, children with distended spleens. Three kings, afflicted with diseases from which even royalty is not free, are among the patients, and have constructed separate rows of huts for their numerous wives and royal families. Every morning the sick come up for treatment, kingly rank giving no precedence. In the afternoon the tents are visited, but in the evening the mind is raised above mortal things, and the doctors go out into the camp and begin singing beside a log fire. Its light falls upon black figures crowding round in a thick half-circle—big, bony men, women shining with castor oil, and swarms of children. Eyes and teeth gleam suddenly in the firelight. Three songs are sung, the brief choruses repeated over and over again. One chorus is sung seventeen times on end, with steadily increasing fervour. A beautiful young woman sits singing with conspicuous enthusiasm. Her mop of hair, its tufts fashionably solid with red mud, hangs over her brow and round her neck, dropping odours, dropping

oil. Her arms jingle with copper bracelets, and probably she is a princess, for at her throat she wears a section of a round white shell which is counted the most precious of ornaments—"worth an ox," they say. Her little cloth is dark blue starred with white, and, squatting upon her heels, she holds her baby between her thighs, stuffing a long, pointed breast into his mouth whenever he threatens to interrupt the music. For her whole soul is given to the singing, and from cavernous lips she pours out to the stars and darkened forest, over and over again, the amazing words of the chorus: "Halleluyah! Halleluyah! Jesu vene mwa aku sanga." "Jesus loves me! Jesus really loves me! His blood will wash my black heart white."

(3) The Philharmonic Hall in London is decorated with long sheets of red, white, and blue fabric. Seated on soft chairs covered with crimson plush, many rows of English people are gathered, all dressed in the usual summer style, but showing little bare skin except the face and hands. On the stage stand three or four rows of men, wearing the conventional evening dress—"smokers" and black ties. In front are the singers; behind, the instrumental orchestra with violins, 'cellos, cornets, clarinets, side-drums, and the rest of a civilised band. Some of the men can hardly be distinguished from the so-called "whites" of the audience, but, in fact, all are negroid, though only two could be thought black. Two women among the instrumentalists, and two who come in to sing, are "just as good as white." Yet in all runs the blood of wild Africans, such as those who dance and sing in the forests. They are descendants of similar men and women once herded down to West African ports, and shipped into slavery upon American planta-

tions; partly for the good of their souls, because only in slavery could they hope to become acquainted with the blessings of the Christian religion. In fact, a philanthropic Bishop used to sit throned upon the pier at one of the chief slave ports, and baptise the fortunate captives by batches, wishing them a happy conversion with his blessing as they embarked.

From men and women who had the luck thus to be sold and set to honest labour in the cotton plantations, encouraged in well-doing by whips and torture, the performers in the Philharmonic Hall are descended; and if they can hardly be called black—well, there is at least one way of working out the depth of colour, and for some strange reason there is less prejudice against a white man who takes a black woman for his concubine than against a negro who marries a white woman. But, brown or nearly white, the spirit of the old African blood lingers long. The programme is taken at full gallop. The orchestra plays; it may be a “ramshackle rag” or it may be something by Brahms or Dvorak. No matter what; gradually all the stage begins to move in time to the music. Some beat their feet, and wag their heads. Presently, all the bodies begin to move. The instrumentalists wave their instruments about. The clarinet describes circles in the air. The 'cello sways to and fro, and finally spins right round in its enthusiasm. The trombones—one can easily imagine what scope for athletic performance a trombone affords, and what scope it requires.

In the midst of a song, a singer is transported into dance. He prances, he wriggles his backbone, he waves his hands and arms. It is the mere decadence of that dance

which lions, zebras, and apes gazed upon from the depths of the forest, wondering what had come over their biped fellow creatures. And the songs—their subjects are the call of the woods, the longing for home and the familiar river, the passionate cry for “Mother o’ mine,” “Mammy o’ mine”—the same eternal theme of the savage song, “I am going to my mother in the village, in the village.” No love exceeds the love of Africans for mother and home. That is why, in the slave islands of San Thomé and Principe in the Gulf of Guinea, they face pitiless flogging and death itself in efforts to escape from the enforced blessings of civilisation. “If I were damned of body and soul, I know whose prayers would make me whole! Mother o’ mine, O mother o’ mine!”

African also is the delight in repetition. “Listen to the lambs—all a-crying!” One does not count how often the words are repeated, but it may well be seventeen times, like that chorus in the forest camp. And here again the perplexing simplicity of the Evangel seems to catch the African heart. “Me, O Lord! Me, O Lord! not the elder or the deacon, standing in the need of prayer, but me, O Lord!”; and so on through various friends and relations, with infinite repetition, always returning to “Me, O Lord!” It was with the same personal hope that the black and naked mother and the patients in the forest hospital shouted like black stars together. Few steps further and one would reach the frenzy of a negro “revival,” thus described by a noble-spirited son of a negress, Mr. Burghardt Du Bois, in his “Souls of Black Folk”:—

The Frenzy or Shouting, when the Spirit of the Lord passed by, and, seizing the devotee, made him mad with supernatural

joy, was the last essential of Negro religion, and the one more devoutly believed in than all the rest. It varied in expression from the silent, rapt countenance or the low murmur and moan to the mad abandon of physical fervor—the stamping, shrieking, and shouting, the rushing to and fro and wild waving of arms, the weeping and laughing, the vision and the trance.

There is one note in the American negro songs which hitherto belongs to them alone. Many of those songs are rightly called “Sorrow Songs,” and sorrow is the natural mood of a kindly and good-tempered race overwhelmed in slavery. But there is another kind of song which promises a relief to sorrow and a happy issue out of all afflictions. When, rather more than a century ago, Baptists and Wesleyans began to move among the plantations, proclaiming that all men are equal in the sight of God, and that the gates of Heaven stand open to black as well as white, the slave-owners and other Christians were glad, for to postpone the rewards of virtue to another life both soothed their consciences and kept the negroes quiet. It is true that, since equality in God’s sight did not consort with slavery, the Churches were put to all the ruses of a hunted fox in the effort to escape the logical consequence. But to the slaves themselves, who can exaggerate the joy of that Gospel? In the midst of hopeless toil and cruel torments, their women dishonoured, their children sold from their hands, they could now dream of a happy land into which they might one day enter, wearing white raiment and golden crowns, accepted by God to sing His praises upon harps for ever.

That glory of possible deliverance gives its deep pathos to the old negro song, “I got a Robe,” with its hardly ex-

pressible longing in the repeated chorus of "Heaven! Heaven!" so softly sung. Beneath the Biblical words of "Go down, Moses! Wait down in Egypt's land," there lurks a further hope of earthly deliverance. Plantation slavery seems long ago, but the negro and the half-breed think of Chicago and of Cardiff to-day. The African thinks of his lands taken from him in South Africa and Rhodesia. He thinks of Portuguese slavery and Congo abominations, and he wonders whence deliverance is coming now.

## XXVII

### FAREWELL TO FLEET STREET

**I**T is still early, but dinner is over—not the club dinner with its buzzing conversation, nor yet the restaurant dinner, hurried into the ten minutes between someone's momentous speech and the leader that has to be written on it. The suburban dinner is over, and there was no need to hurry. They tell me I shall be healthier now. What do I care about being healthier?

Shall I sit with a novel over the fire? Shall I take life at second hand and work up an interest in imaginary loves and the exigencies of shadows? What are all the firesides and fictions of the world to me that I should loiter here and doze, doze, as good as die?

They tell me it is a fine thing to take a little walk before bedtime. I go out into the suburban street. A thin, wet mist hangs over the silent and monotonous houses, and blurs the electric lamps along our road. There will be a fog in Fleet Street to-night, but everyone is too busy to notice it. How friendly a fog made us all! How jolly it was that night when I ran straight into a *Chronicle* man, and got a lead of him by a short head over the same curse! There's no chance of running into anyone here, let alone cursing! A few figures slouch past and disappear; the last postman goes his round, knocking at one house in ten; up and down

the asphalt path leading into the obscurity of the Common a wretched woman wanders in vain; the long, pointed windows of a chapel glimmer with yellowish light through the dingy air, and I hear the faint groans of a harmonium cheering the people dismally home. The groaning ceases, the lights go out, service is over; it will soon be time for decent people to be in bed.

In Fleet Street the telegrams will now be falling thick as—No, I won't say it! No *Vallombrosa* for me, nor any other journalistic tag! I remember once a young sub-editor had got as far as, “The cry is still —” when I took him by the throat. I have done the State some service.

Our sub-editors' room is humming now: a low murmur of questions, rapid orders, the rustle of paper, the quick alarum of telephones. Boys keep bringing telegrams in orange envelopes. Each sub-editor is bent over his little lot of news. One sorts out the speeches from bundles of flimsy. The middle of Lloyd George's speech has got mixed up with Balfour's peroration. If he left them mixed, would anyone be the less wise? Perhaps the speakers might notice it, and that man from Wiltshire would be sure to write saying he had always supported Mr. Balfour, and heartily welcomed this fresh evidence of his consistency.

“Six columns speeches in already; how much?” asks the sub-editor. “Column and quarter,” comes answer from the head of the table, and the cutting begins. Another sub-editor pieces together an interview about the approaching comet. “Keep comet to three sticks,” comes the order, and the comet's perihelion is abbreviated. Another guts a blue-book on prison statistics as savagely as though he were disembowelling the whole criminal population.

There's the telephone ringing. "Hullo, hullo!" calls a sub-editor quietly. "Who are you? Margate mystery? Go ahead. They've found the corpse? All right. Keep it to a column, but send good story. Horrible mutilations? Good. Glimpse the corpse yourself if you can. Yes. Send full mutilations. Will call for them at eleven. Good-bye." "You doing the Archbishop, Mr. Jones?" asks the head of the table. "Cup-tie at Sunderland," answers Mr. Jones, and all the time the boys go in and out with those orange-coloured bulletins of the world's health.

What's a man to do at night out here? Let's have a look at all these posters displayed in front of the Free Library, where a few poor creatures are still reading last night's news for the warmth. Next week there's a concert of chamber-music in the Town Hall. I suppose I might go to that, just to "kill time," as they say. Think of a journalist wanting to kill time! Or to kill anything but another fellow's "stuff," and sometimes an editor! Then there's a boxing competition at the St. John's Arms, and a subscription dance in the Nelson Rooms, and a lecture on Dante, with illustrations from contemporary art, for working men and women, at the Institute. Also there's something called the Why-Be-Lonesome Club for promoting friendly social intercourse among the young and old of all classes. I suppose I might go to that, too. It sounds comprehensive.

There seems no need to be dull in the suburbs. A man in a cart is still crying coke down the street. Another desires to sell clothes-props. A brace of lovers come stealing out of the Common through the mist, careless of mud and soaking grass. I suppose people would say I'm too old to make love on a County Council bench. In love's cash-

books the balance-sheet of years is kept with remorseless accuracy.

The foreign editors are waiting now in their silent room, and the telegrams come to them from the ends of the world. They fold them in packets together by countries or continents—the Indian stuff, the Russian stuff, the Egyptian, Balkan, Austrian, South African, Persian, Japanese, American, Spanish, and all the rest. They'll have pretty nearly seven columns by this time, and the order will come "Two-and-a-half foreign." Then the piecing and cutting will begin. One of them sits in a telephone box with bands across his head, and repeats a message from our Paris correspondent. Through our Paris man we can talk with Berlin and Rome.

From this rising ground I can see the light of the city reflected on the misty air, and somewhere mingled in that light are the big lamps down in Fleet Street. The City's voice comes to me like a confused murmur through a telephone when the words are unintelligible. The only distinct sounds are the dripping of the moisture from the trees in suburban gardens, and the voice of an old lady imploring her pet dog to return from his evening walk.

The voice of all the world is now heard in that silent room. From moment to moment news is coming of treaties and revolutions, of sultans deposed and kings enthroned, of commerce and failures, of shipwrecks, earthquakes, and explorations, of wars and flooded camps and sieges, of intrigue, diplomacy, and assassination, of love, murder, revenge, and all the public joy and sorrow and business of mankind. All the voices of fear, hope, and lamentation echo in that silent little room; and maps hang on the

walls, and guide-books are always ready, for who knows where the next event may come to pass upon this energetic little earth, already twisting for a hundred million years around the sun?

The editor must be back by now. Calm and decisive, he takes his seat in his own room, like the conductor of an orchestra preparing to raise his baton now that the tuning-up is finished. The leader-writers are coming in for their instructions. No need for much consultation to-night—not for the first leader anyhow. For the second—well, there are a good many things one could suggest: Turkey or Persia or the eternal German Dreadnought for a foreign subject; the stage censorship or the price of cotton; and the cutties, or the extinction of hats for both sexes as a light note to finish with. He's always labouring to invent "something light," is the editor. He says we must sometimes consider the public; just as though we wrote the rest of the paper for our own private fun.

But there's no doubt about the first leader to-night. There's only one subject on which it would be a shock to every reader in the morning not to find it written. And, my word, what a subject it is! What seriousness and indignation and conviction one could get into it! I should begin by restating the situation. You must always assume that the reader's ignorance is new every morning, as love should be; and anyone who happens to know something about it likes to see he was right. I should work in adroit references to this evening's speeches, and that would fill the first paragraph—say, three sides of my copy, or something over. In the second paragraph I'd show the immense issues involved in the present contest, and expose the fallacies

of our opponents who attempt to belittle the matter as temporary and unlikely to recur—say, three sides of my copy again, but not a word more. And, then, in the third paragraph, I'd adjure the Government, in the name of all their party hold sacred, to stand firm, and I'd appeal to the people of this great Empire never to allow their ancient liberties to be encroached upon or overridden by a set of irresponsible—well, in short, I should be like General Sherman when at the crisis of a battle he used to say, “Now, let everything go in”—four sides of my copy, or even five if the stuff is running well.

Somebody must be writing that leader now. Possibly he is doing it better than I should, but I hope not. When Hannibal wandered all those years in Asia at the Court of silly Antiochus this or stupid Prusias the other, and knew that Carthage was falling to ruin while he alone might have saved her if only she had allowed him, would he have rejoiced to hear that someone else was succeeding better than himself—had traversed the Alps with a bigger army, had won a second Cannæ, and even at Zama snatched a decisive victory? Hannibal might have rejoiced. He was a very exceptional man.

But here's a poor creature still playing the clarinet down the street, on the pretence of giving pleasure worth a penny. Yes, my boy, I know you're out of work, and that is why you play the “Last Rose of Summer” and “When other Lips.” I am out of work, too, and I can't play anything. You say you learnt when a boy, and once played in the orchestra at Drury Lane; but now you've come to wandering about suburban streets, and having finished “When other Lips,” you will quite naturally play “My

Lodging's on the Cold Ground." Only last night I was playing in an orchestra myself, not a hundred miles (obsolete journalistic tag!)—not a hundred miles from Drury Lane. It was a grand orchestra, that of ours. Night by night it played the symphony of the world, and each night a new symphony was performed, without rehearsal. The drums of our orchestra were the echoes of thundering wars; the flutes and soft recorders were the eloquence of an Empire's statesmen; and our 'cellos and violins wailed with the pity of all mankind. In that vast orchestra I played the horn that sounds the charge, or with its sharp réveille vexes the ear of night before the sun is up. Here is your penny, my brother in affliction. I, too, have once joined in the music of a star, and now wander the suburban streets.

That leader-writer has not finished yet, but the proofs of the beginning of his article will be coming down. In an hour or so his work will be over, and he will pass out into the street exhausted, but happy with the sense of function fulfilled. Fleet Street is quieter now. The lamps gleam through the fog, a motor-bus thunders by, a few late messengers flit along with the latest telegrams, and some stragglers from the restaurants come singing past the Temple. For a few moments there is silence but for the leader-writer's quick footsteps on the pavement. He is some hours in front of the morning's news, and in a few hours more half a million people will be reading what he has just written, and will quote it to each other as their own. How often I have had whole sentences of my stuff thrown at me as conclusive arguments almost before the printing ink was dry!

Here I stand, beside a solitary lamp-post upon a suburban acclivity. The light of the city's existence—I think my successor would say, of her pulsating and palpitating or ebullient existence—is pale upon the sky, and the murmur of her voice sounds like large but distant waves. I stand alone, and near me there is no sound but the complaint of a homeless tramp swearing at the cold as he settles down upon a bench for the night.

How I used to swear at that boy for not coming quick enough to fetch my copy! I knew the young scoundrel's step—I knew the step of every man and boy in that office. I knew the way each of them went up and down the stairs, and coughed or whistled or spat. What knowledge dies with me now that I am gone! *Qualis artifex pereo!* But that boy—how I should love to be swearing at him now! I wonder whether he misses me. I hope he does. "It would be an assurance most dear," as an old song of exile used to say.

## XXVIII

### THE FUTURE CHANCE

**T**HERE are some who regard the last century with the cynicism of disillusionment, like ruined and ill-conditioned lovers railing at the women they adored while fortune lasted. What a great age it seemed, and all to end in the ruin we behold! What immense growth it saw in the knowledge of natural laws, and the power over natural forces! What advancement in nearly every sphere of human thought—in the study of the past and present world, the free criticism of tradition and dogma, the seriousness of religious faith and religious doubt! One may question whether even our Elizabethan age produced a literature of finer quality, and as to the amount of fine literature, and the variety of subject and style, the last century won without question. What progress was made in decency and kindness! What hopes were ventured of perpetual peace! The Factory Acts, the recognition of Trade Unions, the Co-operative Societies, the education of the working people—with what devotion did true philanthropists pursue by such means the amelioration of humanity, and with what confidence did they expect it! All seemed so easy. Why, the grandfather and grandmother of our present king, with all their counsellors, thought they would end war, not by waging the

greatest war of history, but with an International Exhibition in Hyde Park!

Undoubtedly it was a great age, and only ruined and ill-conditioned lovers of it in the past will sneer at it now. Happy was the man who lived through it with understanding, or took part in any phase of its many-sided movement! Happy, perhaps we must also say, if he did not survive its end. The collapse of that age, with all its confident expectations and pathetic self-assurance, has been sudden and complete. The prophecy of Tennyson, its natural Laureate, is fulfilled:—

They tremble, the sustaining crags;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,  
And molten up, and roar in flood;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great *Æon* sinks in blood.

The sustaining crags have trembled; the spires of ice have toppled down; the brute earth lightens to the sky. To whatever side we look, we see thunder-clouds, fringed with fire. What pictures of destruction and misery are now called up by the mere names of Russia, Central Europe, Ireland, and the Middle East! Even America shivers on the edge of panic, and her boasted freedom is a mockery. It may be good riddance that kings and emperors have gone, and that the mighty have been put down from their seats. But the educated middle classes, on whom the last age built its hopes, have gone, too, or are threatened and impoverished. All that the last age meant by culture and civilisation is shaken or destroyed. A hungry people, as a lion, comes slowly or rapidly creeping nearer. Uncounted

millions of the best young lives in the most advanced and civilised nations have been slaughtered by each other without mercy, and the great *Æon* has sunk in blood. When Faust had uttered his terrific curse upon all human existence, an invisible choir of spirits was heard chanting:—

Du hast sie zerstört,  
Die schöne Welt,  
Mit mächtiger Faust;  
Sie stürzt, sie zerfällt!  
Ein Halbgott hat sie zerschlagen!  
Wir tragen  
Die Trümmer ins Nichts hinüber,  
Und klagen  
Über die verlorne Schöne.

So now, some terrible hand, with demoniac violence, has shattered the beautiful world that our fathers knew. It reels. It falls to pieces. We can but bear away its ruins, lamenting over the beauty that once was there and is gone.

Hitherto, even peace has no victories. It is with us as with Jeremiah when he cried, “We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of healing, and behold trouble!” “Is there no balm in Gilead?” he cried. “Is there no physician there?” But he found none. In similar despair, Anatole France cried, in a conversation reported in the *Observer* of August 22, 1920: “Europe is ill, dying. It is Europe that is now the sick man of the world. And peace has not brought its balm.” Peace is so obviously the prime necessity of mankind that when we consider the doings of the Poles and Serbs and Russians and French

and our Government, we are driven to conclude that man is not only the most bloodthirsty of all animals, but also the biggest fool. Does he at heart remain as bloodthirsty as ever? In men and women there abides a deep delight in bloodshed. Mr. Hudson thought so when, in his exquisite book, "Far Away and Long Ago," he writes that even as a small boy he knew that the Gaucho cut throats like a hellish creature revelling in his cruelty, and not "like a gentleman," as Darwin had said:—

He would listen to all his captive could say to soften the heart—all his heartrending prayers and pleadings; and would reply: "Ah, friend"—or little friend, or brother—"your words pierce me to the heart, and I would gladly spare you for the sake of that poor mother of yours who fed you with her milk, and for your own sake, too, since in this short time I have conceived a great friendship towards you; but your beautiful neck is your undoing, for how could I possibly deny myself the pleasure of cutting such a throat—so shapely, so smooth and soft, and so white! Think of the sight of warm red blood gushing from that white column!"

It is the same pleasure that Zola described in "La bête humaine," and no beast but the human beast is so possessed by its madness; for even the tiger, which man was fondly supposed to be "working out" as he moved upward, seeks blood only when he is hungry. It is a long way that the crash of the war and the curse of the peace have hurled us from the aspiring hopes of our fathers; still longer from Pope's comfortable vision of "Nature's ethereal, human angel, Man." As for the old and child-like "Consolations of Religion," even the rather old-fashioned though critical drama of "The Unknown"

suffices to reveal how thin they have worn. Probably in times of distress and upheaval like the present there are not many who can say so happily as George Herbert:—

But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild  
At every word,  
Methought I heard one calling, “Child,”  
And I replied, “My Lord.”

What, then, have we left? In that same conversation, Anatole France, for all his scepticism and his compassionate contempt of the human race, yet seeks to supply some answer. Though, as he says, the powers of darkness have triumphed, and the evangel of light has come out defeated and tarnished with compromise, he seeks some solution for our misery in “action based on a new spirit, on the common interests and needs of all Europe, and of all the world.” He desires to see the common resources of the world pooled and distributed on the basis of a common bond and a common need. This, he thinks, would save Europe, not only materially but spiritually. He admits the enormous difficulty, chiefly owing to the growth of that hatred which calls itself patriotism. On this negative side, he says, the patriotism of France has increased since the armistice. To its hatred of Germany it has now added other hatreds, especially of Russia, while towards England and Italy the feeling is anything but love. Out of all this disintegration, he thinks, only one nation may recover—Russia.

There is something new coming from that quarter [he says] there is all the travail, strength, and agony of something great being born there. Nothing doomed to early death could rouse

such a stir of emotion throughout the entire world. Nothing short of a new and giant spirit could have accomplished what Russia's red armies, barefooted and half-starved, did against a ring of enemies. Of course, there are tremendous faults and lacks, elemental crudenesses there. But that is in the nature of newly born great things.

When asked what was being born, he replied, "Socialism." "Socialism in one form or another is inevitable throughout the world. And it is the one hope for Europe."

So the finest of living writers fixes his hope upon Russia and Socialism. But to some people a hope fixed on Russia may seem both fragile and obnoxious. And as to Socialism, the word has now become too vague and its meaning too diffused to inspire much enthusiasm. It now implies little more than the "benevolence" or "philanthropy" of a century ago. "In one form or another," he says; but all depends upon the definition—State Socialism, Guild Socialism, Fabian, Bolshevik, Second International, Third International, or what you will. So again with his demand for "action based on a new spirit"—all depends on the new spirit, what it is, and how to gain it. Something perhaps may be learnt from Dr. George Herron's interesting discovery about Italy. He finds in Italy a "spiritual renaissance," a "regeneration of the national soul," a determined effort to build a new world among the ruins of the old. The young are living the lives of saints. There are even Quietists among them. Their ideal Christ is again the friend of fishermen and tent-makers and slaves. The passion for slaughter, such as drove Italy into the war under the urgency of D'Annunzio and Marinetti, has died out. They accept Count Sforza's saying, "The watchword

is reconciliation." Even towards Austria, the ancestral enemy, reconciliation is proclaimed, and by her reception of the hungry Austrian children Italy has most nobly displayed her magnanimity. In this picture of Italy we may surely find traces of that new spirit on which the new world's action must be based.

Put man at his lowest; consider him as revealed by the history of the last six years, and by the present state of Europe and this Disunited Kingdom; admit that he has used his marvellous powers of invention chiefly to destroy his fellows, and his supreme possession of reason chiefly to act more brutally than the brutes. Yet, even in the mankind of to-day there appears to be something which we may call both human and humane. Even amid the optimism or "meliorism" of the great age that is now past, it was never the abominations of mankind that astonished me. They were to be expected in a creature of such origin and such inherited instincts. The recurrent surprise lay in the instances of kindness, of generosity, of devotion to some person or idea whence no private advantage could possibly come, but rather loss. And on the top of these revelations—these miracles almost beyond conception—were felt the widespread joys of laughter and irony, the affections of men and women, the love of beauty, and the friendship springing from spiritual or bodily adventures shared in common. Shattered as the world is, traces of these genuine miracles are to be found among its ruins. For it is in ourselves that we are thus or thus.

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